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**PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

532.01 – Preschool Didactics

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance and importance of the research topic. The relevance of this research stems from the need to clarify the status of experiential learning in early childhood education, which has been established as a priority in contemporary educational policies centred on the child, direct experience, and competence development. Nevertheless, an analysis of the conceptual and regulatory frameworks reveals a discontinuity between recognition of the formative value of experience and the absence of a rigorous psychopedagogical foundation appropriate to preschool children's development. Consequently, experiential learning frequently remains at the declarative level, insufficiently supported by coherent operational models. This creates ambiguities in the design and implementation of the teaching-learning process and limits the effectiveness of educational interventions.

This issue is further intensified by the holistic nature of preschool children's development, which entails the integration of cognitive, affective, social, and axiological dimensions into a coherent structure of meaning-making. In the absence of clear psychopedagogical reference points, educational experience risks remaining fragmented and being reduced to activity or immediate lived experience. The literature and educational practices reveal a tendency to privilege the action-oriented dimension of learning at the expense of the internal mechanisms through which experience is organised, particularly reflection and the convergence of types of knowledge, which are essential to transforming experience into meaningful and lasting knowledge.

In this context, the experiential learning model proposed by D. A. Kolb [46; 47] requires reinterpretation. Although it provides a relevant explanatory framework for the transformation of experience into knowledge, it does not fully accommodate the psychopedagogical characteristics of the preschool years. The developmental specificity of this age, characterised by a sensory-affective, symbolic, and holistic way of relating to reality, calls for a reconsideration of the role of reflection and meaning-organisation processes, as well as the integration of the axiological dimension into the structure of learning. Without these adaptations, the model's applicability to early childhood education is limited, thereby justifying its reconceptualisation from a child-development perspective.

The importance of the research topic arises from theoretical and praxiological needs concerning the foundations of experiential learning in early childhood education. Its psychopedagogical reference points must be delineated and integrated in relation to other theories of learning (cognitivism, constructivism, and socioconstructivism), so as to clarify its distinctive nature as a form of knowledge acquisition. Moreover, an integrative framework is needed to move beyond fragmented approaches and bring together epistemic, reflective, and axiological dimensions in a coherent process of meaning construction. The significance of the topic is also underlined by the scarcity of methodological literature and the lack of validated pedagogical models for organising experiential learning in the preschool years, which constrain the translation of theoretical concepts into educational practice. The research thus addresses the need to provide a scientific foundation for, and to operationalise, experiential learning in accordance with the specific characteristics of child development and the requirements of contemporary education.

Overview of the state of research in the field. The intellectual origins of experiential learning lie in the philosophical and pedagogical tradition of knowledge acquired through experience. This tradition can be traced back to Antiquity, particularly to the works of Aristotle [2], who highlighted the relationship between sensation, memory, experience, and the formation of knowledge, and was subsequently continued in the empiricist reflections of J. Locke [52] and D. Hume [44]. In pedagogy, these ideas were developed by J.-J. Rousseau [27], J. H. Pestalozzi [23], and F. Fröbel [65], who advocated learning through direct activity and immediate contact with the environment. In the twentieth century, the theory of educational experience was consolidated through the contributions of J. Dewey [36; 37; 38], who identified experience as the foundation of authentic learning, and was subsequently systematised in the experiential learning model developed by D. A. Kolb [46; 47], which describes the process through which experience is transformed into knowledge.

At the international and European regulatory levels, the premises of experiential learning are reflected in documents promoting child-centred education, active participation, holistic development, and lifelong learning. The Council of the European Union Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems [6], the European strategic framework for education 2021–2030 [7], the *Incheon Declaration – Education 2030* [39], the *2030 Agenda* [60], the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* [35], and the UNICEF report on child well-being [57] support the creation of participatory and inclusive educational settings conducive to children's comprehensive development.

These orientations are consistent with experiential learning in their emphasis on children's active involvement, interaction with the environment, and meaningful experiences.

At the national level, documents such as the *Early Childhood Education Reference Framework* [4] and the *Early Childhood Education Curriculum* [10] likewise promote approaches centred on children's experiences, without, however, providing an explicit and unified theoretical foundation for experiential learning as a distinct pedagogical model. Against the background of these orientations, scholarly interest in experiential learning has increased considerably, from both theoretical and applied perspectives. Contemporary studies address the role of experience in cognitive and socio-emotional development, the function of reflection in the learning process, and the effectiveness of experiential strategies in competence development. Moreover, the specialised literature indicates an increasingly pronounced orientation towards integrating reflective and metacognitive dimensions into learning.

Internationally, the experiential learning paradigm rests on convergent contributions from several theoretical traditions. Within the constructivist and socioconstructivist tradition, J. Dewey [36; 37; 38], J. Piaget [25; 55; 4]56, and L. S. Vygotsky [29; 61; 62] established learning as an active process of knowledge construction grounded in experience, action, and social interaction, while K. Lewin [51] highlighted the dynamics of learning through action and the individual's interaction with a given situation. In this intellectual continuity, J. Dewey [36; 37; 38] conceptualised the relationship between experience and reflection as a process of reconstructing meaning, whereas D. A. Kolb [46; 47] systematised experiential learning as the transformation of experience into knowledge through the integration of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and active experimentation.

Within the humanistic tradition, C. Rogers [58; 59] and J. Bruner [34] emphasised the role of subjective experience, personal engagement, and active participation in knowledge construction, while A. Bandura [31] established the importance of observational learning, modelling, and self-efficacy for development. From philosophical and critical perspectives, W. James [45] and P. Freire [40] made distinctive contributions to understanding experience and the subject's active participation in engaging with the world and shaping their own development.

In the Romanian scholarly literature, researchers including I. Cerghit [5], C. Cucuș [8], L. Stan [28], E. Joița [16], and S. Petrică [24] have highlighted, from complementary perspectives, the roles of the learner's activity, reflection, individual characteristics, and early experiences in learning and development, thereby contributing to the foundation of pedagogical approaches centred on active participation and knowledge construction. From an axiological perspective, C. Cucuș [8] underscores the transition from external direction to autonomy in value attribution, associating authentic education with the development of the capacity to discern, interpret, and personally embrace values. Within this same integrative field, B. Nicolescu's transdisciplinary paradigm [20] is taken up by I. Isac [15] through an analysis of the relationship between the logic of the included middle, levels of Reality, and the establishment of a transdisciplinary perspective on knowledge.

In the Republic of Moldova, relevant premises for the foundation of experiential learning emerge from complementary contributions: Vl. Păslaru [22] substantiates the plurality and complementarity of types of knowledge, providing an epistemological reference point for integrating empirical, symbolic, artistic, and scientific experience; Vl. Guțu and colleagues [3] advocate, at the curricular level, the interconnection of learning outcomes, content, and activities, as well as learners' active participation; S. Gînju [12] explicitly addresses learning through experience in early childhood education; and V. Goraș-Postică [13] highlights the formative potential of dialogue, interaction, and engagement with authentic life contexts. Within the same integrative perspective, V. Pascari [21] establishes the relationship between wholeness and continuity in child development; D. Antoci [1] highlights, from an axiological standpoint, the mobilisation of the personality's experiential potential in developing attitudes and value orientations; and M. Morari [19] draws upon the integration of experiences, reflection, and artistic and symbolic forms of knowledge. These contributions establish a theoretical framework conducive to an experiential approach without, however, systematising experiential learning as a distinct psychopedagogical model of preschool education. A review of the literature reveals gaps concerning a psychopedagogical foundation adapted to preschool childhood, the use of reflection as a mechanism integrating experience, and the availability of validated pedagogical models ensuring the convergence of types of knowledge. Furthermore, methodological literature remains limited, and the translation of theoretical concepts into educational practices is fragmented. These findings justify the need for research directed towards the development of a scientifically grounded and experimentally validated pedagogical model of preschool experiential learning.

The epistemological foundations of the research were established within a conceptual framework encompassing:

- *learning as an active process of knowledge construction through experience and interaction*: J. Dewey [36; 37; 38], J. Piaget [25; 55; 56], L. S. Vigotski [29; 61; 62], K. Lewin [51], D. A. Kolb [46; 47], L. Stan [28];
- *the role of reflection as a mechanism mediating and transforming experience into knowledge in the process of personality development*: J. Dewey [36; 37; 38], D. A. Kolb [46; 47], C. Rogers [58; 59], J. Bruner [34], Im. Kant [17], E. Husserl [14], C. Cucos [8];
- *the convergence of types of knowledge through the reflective integration of epistemic registers in the process of meaning-making*: D. A. Kolb [46; 47], L. S. Vigotski [29; 61; 62], V. I. Molchanov [66], Vl. Păslaru [22].

Despite the increasing prominence of experiential learning in early childhood education policies and recognition of its formative value, an analysis of the scholarly literature and educational practice reveals several **contradictions** relevant to this field of inquiry. First, there is a discrepancy between the promotion of experiential learning at the policy level and the insufficient psychopedagogical grounding of its implementation in preschool settings, as reflected in the absence of coherent models for structuring learning experiences. Second, a tension emerges between the holistic nature of child development and the tendency to reduce learning experiences to their action-oriented component, without adequately incorporating reflection or the epistemic and axiological dimensions. Such reduction fragments the learning process and restricts the transformation of experience into structured knowledge and value orientations. Moreover, theoretical approaches to experiential learning remain insufficiently aligned with actual educational practices, while instruments and operational frameworks that would enable integrated assessment at experiential, epistemological and axiological levels are lacking. Consequently, experiential learning frequently remains a declarative commitment or a fragmented methodological approach rather than being developed as a coherent pedagogical system.

These circumstances gave rise to **the scientific research problem**, formulated as the following question: What psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning are required to substantiate and organize the educational process in accordance with the developmental characteristics of preschool children?

The aim of the research is to identify and apply the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning from the perspective of its epistemic and axiological dimensions, through a reinterpretation of the experiential learning model developed by D. A. Kolb.

The research objectives are as follows:

1. Analysis and systematization of the conceptual foundations and regulatory framework underpinning experiential learning in preschool education;
2. Examination of the epistemic and axiological dimensions of preschool experiential learning from the perspective of the convergence of different types of knowledge;
3. Identification of the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning from the perspective of the convergence of different types of knowledge and the educational valorization of children's experiences;
4. Development of the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning*, based on theoretically substantiated psychopedagogical foundations;
5. Implementation and experimental validation of the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning*.

Research hypothesis: The psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning will demonstrate their formative effectiveness provided that:

- learning actively engages preschool children in direct experiences of exploration, action and interaction, fostering the progressive development of emerging forms of behavioural self-regulation and value orientation;
- reflection on experience will function as a continuous and transversal integrative element of experiential learning, facilitating meaning-making and the emergence of the value dimension of learning;
- the convergence of types of knowledge will be harnessed as an implicit principle of experiential learning, playing a transversal role in the organisation of knowledge;
- the dynamics whereby experience is transformed into knowledge will be supported as a process through which different types of knowledge come together and acquire unity of meaning in preschool children's development.

Synthesis of the research methodology and justification of the research methods selected

The study employed methods selected and interrelated according to the stages of the scientific inquiry and the stated objectives: methods for identifying the research problem and establishing the theoretical foundation (literature review, conceptual and comparative analysis, synthesis, and theoretical modelling), which enabled the epistemological framework to be delineated and the pedagogical model of preschool experiential learning to be developed; empirical data collection methods (systematic psychopedagogical observation, standardised psychometric instruments – the BASC-2 TRS 6/11, Cognitive Competence Screening SCC-E 5/7, and Social Competence Screening SCS-E 5/7 – and author-developed instruments – FARE, FCDR, FOMA, and criterion-based descriptive grids), used during the baseline assessment stage to diagnose initial levels of experiential dimensions and test the model's structural relationships; intervention and pedagogical experimentation methods, applied during the formative stage through the controlled implementation of the PEL model and longitudinal monitoring of indicators; and methods of analysing and interpreting the results (descriptive, comparative, and correlational statistical analysis – Pearson, ACVA –graphical representations, and qualitative interpretation), used during the post-intervention assessment stage to evaluate the impact of the intervention and experimentally validate the model. The methods were selected to investigate the experiential, epistemic, reflective, and axiological dimensions of learning in an integrated manner and to ensure methodological coherence and data triangulation.

Scientific novelty and originality lie in the psychopedagogical substantiation of preschool experiential learning through the integration of the *epistemological, reflective, and axiological dimensions*; the conceptualization of the *cognitive field* as an integrative space encompassing experience and cognitive processes, within which reflective organization and meaning-making take place; the theoretical substantiation of the *convergence of different types of knowledge* as a mechanism for integrating epistemic registers in the process of constructing meaning from experience; the identification and systematization of the *psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning*, highlighting the role of reflection as a transversal integrative mechanism through which experience is transformed into knowledge, meaning, and value; the development and implementation of the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning*, through the reinterpretation and further development of D. A. Kolb's theoretical framework and the articulation of the ontological, epistemological, and axiological levels of learning; the development of a methodological framework for the multidimensional investigation and assessment of preschool experiential learning, through the design of specific instruments for analyzing epistemic convergence, reflective processing, and axiological manifestations; as well as the experimental validation of the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning*, by demonstrating preschool children's experiential, epistemic, reflective, and axiological progress under the conditions of the implemented pedagogical intervention.

Theoretical significance lies in the advancement of the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning through the clarification of the relationships between experience, reflection, the convergence of different types of knowledge, meaning-making, and value formation; the expansion of the explanatory perspective on experiential learning through the integration of the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions; the deepening of the understanding of reflection as a transversal mechanism for organizing and assigning value to experience; as well as the theoretical substantiation of a system of psychopedagogical foundations that contributes to the development of the theoretical and methodological framework of experiential learning in preschool education.

Practical value of the research lies in the development, implementation, and experimental validation of the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning*, which provides methodological guidelines for the design, implementation, and assessment of preschool experiential learning; the development and implementation, over the course of one preschool academic year, of a formative programme comprising 30 instructional sequences and stimulus situations aimed at fostering reflection, the convergence of different types of knowledge, meaning-making, and axiological manifestations; the development and systematization of quality indicators for experiential learning and specific research and assessment instruments – the *Experiential Engagement Assessment Grid*, *FARE*, *FCDR*, *FOMA*, *ICE*, and *ISE*; the conceptualization of the *Child's Individual Epistemic Profile* (PEIC) and the *Epistemic Convergence Index* (ICEp), as well as the application of *Correlational Analysis of Aggregated Variables* (ACVA), with a view to examining the relationships among the components of the model and monitoring preschool children's experiential progress.

The research findings contributing to the resolution of the scientific problem are as follows:

- Identification and theoretical substantiation of the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning through the systematization of the conditions and mechanisms underlying the transformation of lived experience into knowledge, meaning, and value, in accordance with the developmental characteristics of preschool children.
- Theoretical substantiation of the functional relationships between experience, reflection, the convergence of different types of knowledge, meaning-making, and the progressive internalization of values, through the integration of epistemological, reflective, and axiological perspectives and the reconceptualization of reflection as a continuous process and a transversal integrative mechanism of experiential learning.
- Development and implementation of the Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning through the reinterpretation and further development of D. A. Kolb's theoretical framework, the articulation of the ontological, epistemological, and axiological levels, and the integration of reflective and epistemic mechanisms into a conceptual and methodological framework for organizing preschool experiential learning.
- Experimental validation of the Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning through the implementation of the formative programme and the comparative assessment of outcomes, which demonstrated progress across the experiential, epistemic, reflective, and axiological dimensions and provided empirical support for the applicability and effectiveness of the model within the investigated educational context.

Approval of Research Results. The research findings were examined, discussed, and approved during the meetings of the Doctoral School's Advisory Committee, being disseminated through publications in scientific journals and presented at national and international scientific conferences, as follows:

The research findings were disseminated through the publication of 7 articles in national and international scientific journals, as follows: *The Processuality of Experiential Learning in Preschool* in the journal *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies* (Romania, 2023); *Învățarea experiențială în preșcolaritate: abordări practice și efecte asupra dezvoltării copiilor* in the journal *Univers Pedagogic* (Republic of Moldova, 2024); *Integrating Experiential Learning into the Didactic Approach in Preschool Education* in the journal *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies* (Romania, 2026); *Reflection as an Integrative Element in Preschool Experiential Learning* in the journal *Acta et Commentationes. Științe ale Educației* (Republic of Moldova, 2026); *The Role of the Teacher in Organizing Experiential Learning Situations in Preschool Education* in the journal *Scientific Notes of the Pedagogical Department* (Ukraine, 2026); *Repere pentru adaptarea teoriei învățării experiențiale în preșcolaritate* in the journal *Univers Pedagogic* (Republic of Moldova, 2026); *Metode și instrumente de investigare a învățării experiențiale preșcolare* in the journal *Akademios* (Republic of Moldova, 2026).

The research findings were presented and discussed at 13 national and international scientific events, being reflected in their published proceedings, as follows: *Conceptul de învățare experiențială în educația timpurie* in: International Scientific and Practical Conference “Educația artistic-spirituală în contextul învățământului contemporan: realizări, provocări, perspective”, Alecu Russo State University of Bălți, Republic of Moldova, 2020; *Experiential Learning in Preschool Age* in: International Scientific Conference “Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine”, 3rd edition, Iași-Chișinău, 2021; *Perspective asupra învățării la vârsta preșcolară* in: International Scientific Conference “Institutul de Științe ale Educației: ascensiune, performanțe, personalități (1941–2021)”, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2021; *Educația în aer liber prin învățare experiențială la preșcolari* in: Scientific Conference with International Participation “Educația de calitate în contextul provocărilor societale”, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2022; *Învățarea experiențială prin joc la preșcolari* in: National Scientific Conference with International Participation “Educația din perspectiva conceptului Clasa Viitorului”, 3rd edition, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2022; *Experiența ca sursă în învățarea experiențială* in: International Conference “Diversitatea disciplinelor din cadrul sistemului științelor educației”, Neamț, Romania, 2022; *Experiential Learning in Kindergarten* in: International Conference “Education Facing Contemporary World Issues – EDU WORLD 2022”, 9th edition, Romania, 2022; *Învățarea experiențială ca sursă de învățare și dezvoltare a copiilor preșcolari* in: International Scientific Conference “Știință și educație: noi abordări și perspective”, 25th edition, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2023; *Perspectiva învățării experiențiale în grădiniță* in: Annual Scientific Conference of

Doctoral Students with International Participation “Probleme actuale ale științelor umanistice”, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2023; *Asigurarea continuității între educația timpurie și învățământul primar prin învățarea experiențială* in: Cross-Border Scientific Symposium “Învățarea școlară în contextul provocărilor societale”, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2023; *Explorarea și descoperirea: elemente cheie în învățarea experiențială a preșcolarilor* in: International Scientific Conference “Cercetarea pedagogică: exigențe contemporane și perspective de dezvoltare”, 2nd edition, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, 2024; *Artele în activități de educație integrată din perspectiva învățării experiențiale* in: International Scientific and Practical Conference “Educația artistică în contemporaneitate: realizări, provocări, perspective”, 3rd edition, Alecu Russo State University of Bălți, Republic of Moldova, 2024; *Învățarea experiențială în politicile educaționale pentru educația timpurie: România și Republica Moldova* in: International Scientific Conference “Managementul educațional: realizări și perspective de dezvoltare”, 6th edition, Alecu Russo State University of Bălți, Republic of Moldova, 2026.

Publications Related to the Thesis: 20 scientific publications, including 7 articles in journals from the National Register of Specialized Journals included in the List of Databases Accepted by ANACEC and 13 articles published in the proceedings of international and national conferences.

Implementation of Research Results took place between 2021 and 2025 at Extended-Day Kindergarten No. 57 in Constanța, Romania, and Extended-Day Kindergarten No. 33 in Constanța, Romania. The research sample comprised 188 participants: 90 preschool children, 90 parents, and 8 teachers. The experimental sample proper consisted of 90 children divided into four groups: two experimental groups – G1 (n = 23) and G2 (n = 22), from Extended-Day Kindergarten No. 57, Constanța and two control groups–G3 (n = 23) and G4 (n = 22), from Extended-Day Kindergarten No. 33, Constanța.

Thesis Length and Structure: Abstract (in Romanian, English, and Russian), list of abbreviations, introduction, 3 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliographic references (171 titles), and 87 appendices. The thesis comprises 141 pages of main text, including 23 tables and 26 figures.

Key Concepts: experiential learning, experiential reflection, convergence of different types of knowledge, cognitive field, epistemic convergence, axiological dimension, Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning.

CONTENTS OF THE THESIS

The Introduction substantiates the topicality and significance of research on experiential learning in early childhood education, describes the state of research in the field and the theoretical, epistemological and regulatory framework, and formulates the research problem, aim and objectives. It also highlights the scientific novelty and originality of the study through the conceptual grounding of the convergence of types of knowledge and the development of the Pedagogical Model of PEL, while establishing the theoretical significance and practical value of the work.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Foundations of Experiential Learning is devoted to the conceptual and epistemological substantiation of experiential learning in early childhood education, through the clarification and differentiation of the concepts of *experience*, *learning* and *experiential learning*, and the analysis of their evolution within educational theories. The chapter examines theories of experiential learning and the main contributions of the experiential paradigm in relation to other learning theories. The epistemological perspective highlights the *cognitive field*, the *role of reflection* and the *convergence of types of knowledge* in meaning-making. Furthermore, educational policy documents promoting experience-centred learning and the limitations of its operationalization in preschool educational practice are examined. Thus, the theoretical and methodological framework necessary for the substantiation of the Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning is established.

The chapter seeks to clarify the concepts fundamental to the present research—“experience” and “learning”. The investigation aims to provide a scientific foundation for the study by analysing and drawing on theories from philosophy, psychology, pedagogy and sociology in order to define these concepts coherently and demonstrate their structuring role in preschool children’s development, with implications for early childhood education. The conceptual research design follows an interdisciplinary structure, proceeding from general theoretical distinctions and international systematisations of the concepts of *experience* and *learning* to elucidate the relationship between

experience and preschool children’s development through learning. The analysis integrates classical and contemporary theories (J. Piaget, J. Dewey, L. S. Vygotsky, A. Bandura, P. Bourdieu, among others).

The foundation of any learning process consists of the totality of lived experiences, actions, and interactions through which an individual progresses. Unlike learning focused primarily on the formal transmission of information, experiential learning regards personal experience as a source of understanding and meaning-making. J. Dewey maintains that learning from experience entails establishing a retrospective and prospective connection between what we do to things and what we undergo as a result [36, p. 139]. Similarly, D. A. Kolb defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience [47, p. 41], while C. R. Rogers emphasises the personal and authentic nature of this process, arguing that the only learning which significantly influences behaviour is that which individuals discover and appropriate for themselves [59, p. 158].

The philosophical analysis of the concept reveals that experience has successively been interpreted as a source of knowledge, a mechanism of cognitive structuring, intentional lived experience, and a mode of relating to the world. J. Locke identifies sensation and reflection as fundamental sources of ideas [52, pp. 104–109], whereas D. Hume locates the origin of ideas in impressions derived from sensory experience [44, pp. 7–10]. Im. Kant, however, goes beyond simple empiricism by demonstrating that experience becomes knowledge through the cooperation of sensibility and understanding. He expresses this relationship in the proposition that thoughts without content are empty and intuitions without concepts are blind [17, p. 92]. From this perspective, experience does not constitute passive reception, but an active process of structuring sensory data through the forms and categories of the knowing subject.

This conception makes it possible to represent the relationship between sensory experience, a priori structures and the constitution of knowledge, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

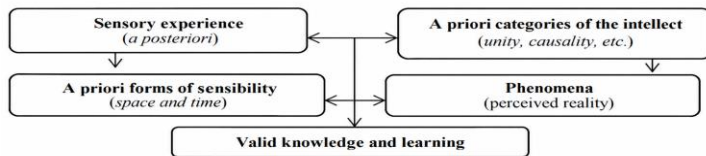


Figure 1.1. The concept of experience in learning from Im. Kant’s perspective

The figure shows that learning results from the interaction between sensory experience and the subject’s organising structures; knowledge becomes possible through the integration of experiential data into a coherent structure.

A further relevant perspective is phenomenology. For E. Husserl, experience constitutes the primordial mode through which consciousness relates to the world, while its intentional character expresses the fact that every consciousness is “consciousness of something” [14, p. 73]. Lived experience becomes an object of reflection, and meaning is constituted in the relationship between the subject and the phenomenon [14, pp. 128–129]. In pedagogical terms, this perspective underpins the formative value of direct experience, affective involvement and exploration as prerequisites for the progressive construction of meaning.

The process through which meaning is constituted from a phenomenological perspective is synthesised in Figure 1.2.

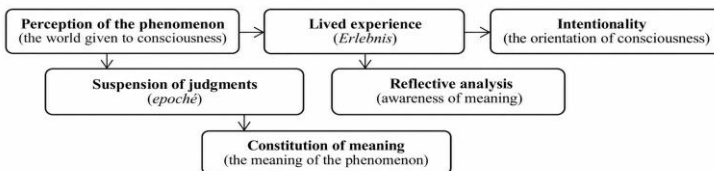


Figure 1.2. The process of accumulating learning experience from E. Husserl’s perspective

In this representation, experience begins with the perception of a phenomenon and its immediate lived apprehension, proceeds through intentionality and the suspension of judgements, and is followed by reflective analysis and the constitution of meaning. Thus, unlike the Kantian perspective, which emphasises the a priori structures of knowledge, the Husserlian perspective highlights the emergent meaning of lived experience.

M. Heidegger complements this approach by understanding experience as a situated and temporal mode of existence in which the subject understands the self in relation to the world [42, p. 78; p. 236]. In the same vein, contemporary phenomenological research emphasises the subjective and transformative nature of experience. M. Brinkmann points out that authentic educational experience may be discontinuous and transformative [33, pp. 50–51], while D. Zahavi and D. Zelinsky highlight the existence of prereflective self-awareness preceding explicit reflection [64, pp. 45–46]. B. C. Hopkins demonstrates that the meaning of experience is constituted through the relationship between the content of lived experience, the manner in which it is lived, and its concrete enactment [43, pp. 63–66].

At the intersection of these perspectives, experience emerges as a complex, dynamic and structured process through which the subject enters into a relationship with the world and constructs meaning. From a psychological standpoint, W. James stresses the continuity of experience and the attribution of successive lived experiences to the same self [45, pp. 237–239], while J. Piaget demonstrates that cognitive development occurs through the child's action upon the environment and the progressive reorganisation of cognitive structures [55].

J. Dewey's contribution is fundamental to the transition from the general concept of experience to that of educational experience. He considers education to be a dimension of life itself, with experience constituting the foundation of formation [36, p. 13]. He also specifies that not every experience is educational: its value depends on continuity, interaction and the effects it produces on subsequent development [37, p. 25]. Consequently, the educator's role is to structure the conditions under which experiences occur and to foster the relationship between action, consequences, and reflection [37, pp. 27–29].

On this basis, the preschool child's experience may be understood as an integrative and dynamic process of engaging with the world, through which the child constructs and organises meanings by means of direct lived experiences, bodily engagement, interaction with the environment and emergent reflection. Experience is not a succession of impressions, but a structure in which sensory, cognitive, affective and social dimensions are interdependent.

As regards the concept of learning, the analysis highlights a progression from approaches centred on behavioural change towards constructivist and sociocultural conceptions. J. Piaget places the activity of the knowing subject at the centre of knowledge construction and states that "to understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery" [56, p. 20]. Assimilation, accommodation and equilibration explain the dynamics through which children integrate new experiences and progressively reorganise their cognitive structures [55, pp. 6–8].

L. S. Vygotsky introduces a sociocultural perspective, demonstrating the social nature of development and the role of mediation. Psychological functions first emerge at the interpersonal level and are subsequently internalised [61, p. 57]. The zone of proximal development highlights the distance between what the child can achieve independently and what can be achieved with support [61, p. 86], thereby substantiating the educator's role in progressively scaffolding learning. From this perspective, language is an essential instrument of thought and self-regulation [62, p. 218].

J. Bruner complements the constructivist paradigm through the enactive, iconic and symbolic modes of representation [34, p. 11], which are relevant to understanding the child's progression from action to representation and symbolisation. A. Bandura emphasises the role of observation and modelling in learning [31, p. 22], while sociological perspectives demonstrate that individual experience is continually shaped by social interaction, cultural context and the practices of the community to which the individual belongs [32, p. 53].

The evolution of experiential learning theories reveals a transition from valuing direct experience to conceptualising it as a process of knowledge transformation. J.-J. Rousseau advocates learning through direct experience [27, p. 52]; J. H. Pestalozzi assigns intuition and immediate perception a foundational role in knowledge acquisition [23, p. 102]; and F. Fröbel places action and play at the centre of child development [65, p. 235].

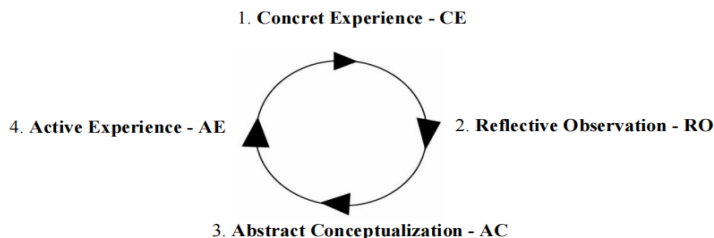


Figure 1.3. David A. Kolb's experiential learning model [47]

J. Dewey introduces the qualitative distinction between educative and non-educative experiences, emphasising that an experience becomes formative only insofar as it supports subsequent development [373, p. 25]. Moreover, learning extends beyond the cognitive dimension through the development of intellectual and emotional dispositions [ibidem, p. 30] and the dynamic relationship between the individual and the environment [ibidem, p. 43].

K. Lewin strengthens the cyclical and reflective character of learning through the relationship between planning, action and the analysis of outcomes [51, pp. 34–46]. J. Piaget highlights the constructive nature of knowledge and the role of cognitive disequilibrium in reorganising existing structures [55, p. 7], while L. S. Vygotsky introduces the dimension of cultural and semiotic mediation [61, p. 55].

A major synthesis of these contributions is provided by David A. Kolb, who defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience [47, pp. 38–41]. His model organises the learning process into four interdependent stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

Concrete experience (CE) constitutes the starting point of the process; reflective observation (RO) enables the analysis and reinterpretation of what has been experienced; abstract conceptualisation (AC) organises experience into cognitive structures and generalisations; and active experimentation (AE) tests and applies these structures in new situations. The process is cyclical, with each new experience providing the basis for renewed learning [47, p. 27].

The four components are organised around two fundamental processes: the grasping of experience and the transformation of experience. D. A. Kolb specifies that knowledge results from the combination of how experience is grasped and how it is transformed [47, p. 41]. The relationship between the concrete and the abstract, reflection and action, reveals the dialectical nature of the process and provides a basis for introducing the concept of the cognitive field as a space in which experience is perceived, analysed and reorganised into structures of meaning.

Nevertheless, the application of D. A. Kolb's model in preschool education requires its adaptation to the characteristics of early development. Young children learn through action, play, exploration, sensory interaction and emergent reflection. The processes described in the model are present from the earliest years, but are manifested at cognitive, verbal and symbolic levels specific to this developmental stage. Accordingly, an interpretation of the experiential cycle adapted to preschool education has been proposed.

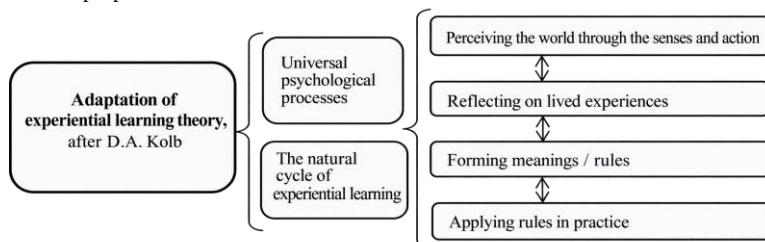


Figure 1.4. Guidelines for adapting D. A. Kolb's experiential learning theory to preschool education

The proposed adaptation synthesises the process into four phases accessible in early development: perceiving the world through the senses and action – reflecting on lived experiences – forming

meanings/rules – applying these in practice. The figure does not merely simplify the model; rather, it provides a psychopedagogical reinterpretation that draws upon universal psychological processes and the particular characteristics of preschool learning.

C. Rogers complements the experiential model with a humanistic dimension, emphasising personal relevance, intrinsic motivation, autonomy and affective engagement [58, p. 5]. P. Freire extends the paradigm through the relationship between reflection and action, conceiving learning as a process of interpreting and transforming reality [40, p. 51]. Contemporary research confirms the need to integrate the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions of learning and highlights the limitations of a rigid application of the classical experiential model [53, p. 1068].

From an epistemological perspective, preschool experiential learning concerns the ways in which children's experience is transformed into knowledge through action, reflection and mediation. The process entails the interaction of different ways of relating to reality and their organisation into a unified structure of meaning.

The typology adopted in this research identifies empirical, artistic, mythical-symbolic and scientific forms of knowledge, which do not operate separately but complement one another and become progressively interconnected. On this basis, the concept of the convergence of types of knowledge is established, understood as a process of moving from experiential plurality towards unity of meaning. D. A. Kolb's model provides the processual framework for the transformation of experience; however, the analysis demonstrates the need to extend it through explicit integration of epistemic convergence and the axiological dimension.

The analysis of curricular documents from Romania and the Republic of Moldova shows that both systems promote children's holistic development, play, exploration and active learning. In the Republic of Moldova, the terminology used is more closely aligned with the experiential paradigm [4; 10], whereas in Romania strategies compatible with experiential learning are promoted without systematic terminological specification [9]. In both contexts, the educator plays a central role in designing and facilitating learning experiences.

However, the comparative analysis reveals that the theoretical foundations of experiential learning and the mechanisms through which experience is transformed into meaning and value remain insufficiently articulated. This limitation warrants the development of a coherent psychopedagogical framework and a pedagogical model adapted to early childhood education, integrating experience, reflection, the convergence of types of knowledge and the axiological dimension.

In conclusion, the conceptual and theoretical analysis highlights the interdependence of experience and learning. Experience constitutes both the source and the context of knowledge construction, while learning is the process through which experience is transformed, organised and imbued with value. The theories examined demonstrate the importance of action, social interaction, language, reflection and pedagogical mediation in child development. D. A. Kolb's model provides the fundamental processual framework, but requires adaptation to preschool education and extension through the integration of epistemological and axiological dimensions. These considerations underpin the development of the Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning (PEL), presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 2. The Methodological and Axiological Framework of Experiential Learning in Preschool Education examines the mechanisms of experiential learning in greater depth and establishes the methodological framework of the research. It analyses the *convergence of types of knowledge* and the *role of reflection* as an integrative mechanism of experience, as well as their contribution to the epistemological organisation and construction of meaning. The chapter develops an integrative perspective on experiential learning by interrelating its epistemic, reflective and axiological dimensions, and substantiates the concept of epistemic convergence in early childhood education. On this basis, the PEL pedagogical model is developed and justified, with its structure, components and functional relationships described. The research variables are also defined, and the methods and instruments required for the experimental operationalisation of the model are selected.

The theoretical and epistemological analysis demonstrates that experiential learning is plural, dynamic and processual in nature and cannot be reduced to a single type of knowledge or a single cognitive mechanism. J. Piaget's theories of cognitive development [55; 56], L. S. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective [29; 61], the modes of representation described by J. Bruner [34], J. Dewey's pragmatic approach [37], and D. A. Kolb's experiential model [47] converge on the proposition that the act of knowing is structurally multiple yet unified in meaning.

In preschool education, this plurality assumes particular significance because children construct their understanding of reality through the holistic interaction of perception, action, emotion, symbol

and value. The typology of knowledge proposed by Vl. Pâslaru, which distinguishes empirical, mythical-religious, scientific and artistic forms [22, pp. 23–25], serves as an epistemological reference point. Their holistic and complementary nature allows early knowledge to be interpreted as a syncretic experience in which distinct epistemic registers do not operate in isolation but are articulated into a unity of meaning.

D. A. Kolb’s model explains the transformation of experience through the sequence of concrete experience – reflective observation – active experimentation – abstract conceptualisation [47]. For early childhood education, however, the model needs to be extended to integrate different types of knowledge and the axiological dimension. From this perspective, convergence denotes the articulation of multiple epistemic registers into a unified and coherent structure. The concept is supported both by its general meaning of movement towards a common point [11] and by the notion of the consilience of knowledge, formulated by W. Whewell [63, p. 230] and developed in contemporary interdisciplinary research [49].

The distinction drawn by J. P. Guilford between divergent and convergent production, incorporated into the Structure of Intellect model [41], is relevant to establishing the mechanism of convergence. In preschool children’s activities, divergent production manifests itself through play, imagination and exploration, generating multiple alternatives and possibilities, whereas convergent production organises and stabilises experience, directing thinking towards relationships and meaning. The two processes are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary, with reflection mediating the transition from divergent exploration to cognitive organisation.

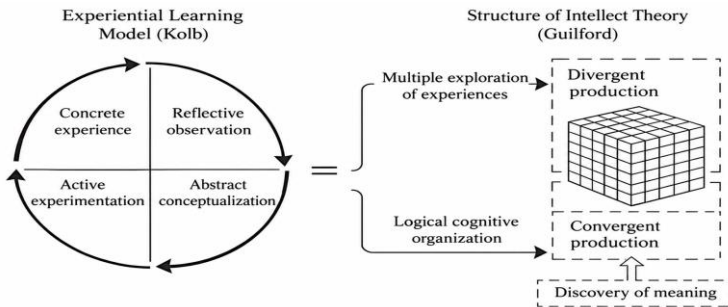


Figure 2.1. Correlation of the experiential learning model (D. A. Kolb) with the “Structure of Intellect” theory (J. P. Guilford) in preschool education

The correlation between the experiential model and J. P. Guilford’s theory demonstrates that reflective observation initiates the organisation of experiences, conceptualisation stabilises meaning, and active experimentation validates it in new situations. In this reinterpretation, convergence does not entail a reduction of diversity; rather, it is the mechanism through which the plurality of experiences is selected, compared and integrated into a coherent structure of knowledge [41; 47]. The integrative functioning of cognitive processes supports this interpretation. M. Zlate maintains that higher-order cognitive processes involve combining data originating from different sensory analysers and integrating them through memory and thinking [30, p. 143]. Perception organises sensory information [30, pp. 58–60], memory ensures the continuity of experiences [Ibidem, pp. 87–90], thinking performs analysis, establishes relationships and enables generalisation [Ibidem, pp. 139–144], while language and imagination mediate the symbolic reconstruction of experience [Ibidem, pp. 171–175; p. 162]. From L. S. Vygotsky’s perspective, language restructures thought [29, p. 118] and supports the progressive internalisation of experience [Ibidem, p. 92].

Figure 2.2 synthesises the dynamics linking sensory stimulation, perception, representation, thinking, imagination and memory with the activated domains of knowledge. Learning thus emerges as an integrative rather than linear process, consistent with the interactive-circular perspective on cognitive mechanisms [30, pp. 210–212]. In this context, the convergence of types of knowledge is defined as the process whereby forms of knowledge, articulated with the sensory, symbolic and intuitive dimensions of preschool experience, are progressively brought together into a coherent structure of meaning through the integration of experience, reflection and cognitive organisation.

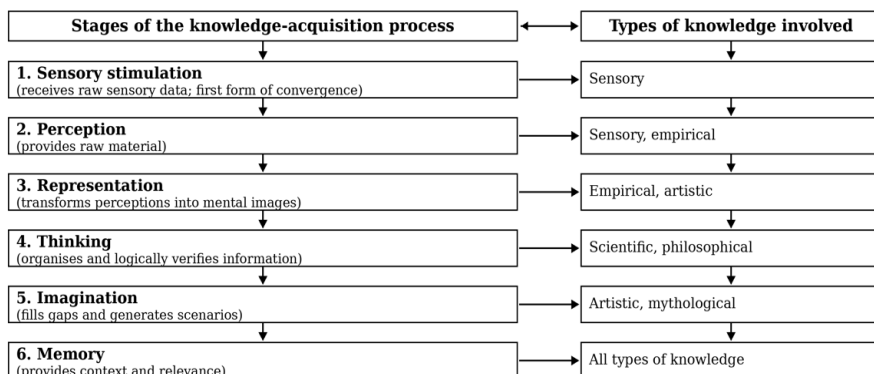


Figure 2.2. Dynamics of cognitive processes and knowledge domains in convergence

Research on knowledge integration confirms that learning entails connecting distinct cognitive structures to establish a more coherent knowledge base [50, pp. 1190–1191], while transfer across domains can deepen understanding of complex phenomena [54]. Similarly, M. Morari highlights the role of interactions among empirical, scientific and symbolic knowledge in visual arts activities, whereby integration facilitates the transformation of experiences into meaningful, personalised representations [19, pp. 152–153].

In preschool education, experience becomes a source of knowledge only insofar as it is processed, interrelated, and organised. **Reflection** is conceptualised as a process through which the sensory, affective, cognitive, and social dimensions of experience are interconnected and transformed into a coherent meaning endowed with formative value. In its emergent forms, reflection is supported by developing language, emotional expression, play, and symbolic activities. The Dictionary of Psychology defines reflection as a process of self-observation and self-analysis aimed at regulating behaviour [26, p. 607], while the pedagogical literature emphasises its role in restructuring experience and attributing value to it [18, pp. 19–28].

The epistemological foundations of reflection can be found in Im. Kant's conception, according to which reflection entails comparing representations and relating them to the faculties of cognition [17, A260/B316; A262/B318]. In E. Husserl's phenomenology, reflection directs consciousness towards its own lived experiences and acts [14, pp. 141–143, 271–282], while the temporal continuity of experience makes it possible to return to it reflectively [14, pp. 300–306]. V. I. Molchanov develops the unifying function of reflection, showing that it interrelates the sources of knowledge and lends continuity to experience [66, pp. 35–40].

From the perspective of genetic psychology, J. Piaget explains the reorganisation of experience through assimilation, accommodation and equilibration [55, pp. 6–8], while internalised action prepares the emergence of operational thinking [25, p. 86]. For preschool children, reflection is concrete, situated and action-oriented, manifesting itself through repeating and correcting actions, comparing outcomes, anticipating consequences and symbolic representation. In J. Dewey's conception, reflection confers educational value upon experience: it entails the active and careful examination of knowledge [38, p. 9] and the identification of relationships between actions and their consequences [36, pp. 139–145].

In D. A. Kolb's model, reflection is associated with reflective observation and mediates the relationship between experience and conceptualisation [47, p. 38]. The present research extends this positioning: reflection operates not merely as a distinct stage but as a transversal process permeating the entire learning cycle. It manifests itself through the integration of action, emotion and outcome, meaning-making, preparation for conceptualisation and self-regulation. Experience is thus progressively transformed into meaning, while meaning is tested and restructured through action [47, pp. 40–42; 29, p. 194].

Reflection also opens up the axiological dimension of learning. Through revisiting experiences, meanings acquire stability and personal relevance, becoming reference points for children's choices

and actions. C. Cuciş emphasises the transition from external directiveness to inner autonomy and the emergence of self-constructed normativity [8, pp. 163–165]. From this perspective, values are not merely prescriptions transmitted externally, but emergent outcomes of lived, reflected upon and progressively internalised experience.

The need to develop the **Pedagogical Model of PEL** arises from the discrepancy between the theoretical recognition of the value of this paradigm and its insufficient operationalization in educational practice and curricular documents. In the absence of a coherent psychopedagogical framework, children's experiences are not systematically utilized from epistemic and axiological perspectives, thus necessitating the development of an integrative pedagogical model capable of overcoming fragmented approaches and supporting the transformation of experience into meaningful knowledge with formative value. Within this conceptual framework, the model is grounded in the reinterpretation and further development of D. A. Kolb's theoretical conception, adapted to the developmental characteristics of preschool children and the requirements of contemporary education, while integrating the contributions of J. Dewey [37], Vl. Pâslaru [22], J. Piaget [55; 56], L. S. Vygotsky [29; 61], and J. Bruner [34]. The model is conceptualized as a theoretical and applied construct, organized around three complementary dimensions: normative, structural, and processual.

The normative dimension is expressed through principles specific to PEL: valuing lived experience; the processual nature of learning; reflection as an integrative mechanism; convergence of types of knowledge; axiological orientation; and child-centredness, with the child regarded as the subject of their own development. These principles give specificity to the general framework of early childhood education and guide the design of learning situations towards the transformation of experience into meaning, knowledge and value.

The structural dimension of the model is organised into three interdependent levels. The ontological level – *lived experience and experiencing* – corresponds to the child's direct, holistic and sensory-affective engagement with the world. The epistemological level – *meaning and knowledge* – marks the transformation of experience through reflection and the convergence of epistemic registers. The axiological level – *value and becoming* – expresses the progressive internalisation of meaning and the orientation of behaviour in relation to oneself, others and emerging values. The model thus traces a progression from the undifferentiated subject to the experiential-reflective subject and, subsequently, to the axiological subject.

An **element of originality** of the structural dimension lies in the integration of the *cognitive field*, conceptualized as an integrative space between the ontological and epistemological levels, where the interaction between the prehension and transformation of experience, mediated by reflection and the convergence of types of knowledge, facilitates the organization of knowledge and meaning-making, creating the prerequisites for the valorization of experience at the axiological level.

Figure 2.3 synthesises the architecture of the PEL model and highlights the role of reflection as a transversal integrative process. The element of novelty lies in articulating the ontological, epistemological and axiological levels, establishing the convergence of types of knowledge as a structural principle of meaning-making, and explicitly identifying internalised values as the horizon of development of the experiential subject. In this way, the model moves beyond an exclusively cognitive interpretation of Kolb's cycle and extends it into an ontological–epistemological–axiological perspective.

The processual dimension comprises four interdependent stages: preparation, design, implementation and evaluation of the learning experience, linked to the dynamics of the experiential cycle. These stages do not operate rigidly but constitute a continuous and reflective process. Preparation involves creating the experiential context and stimulating the child's interest; design organises the conditions for reflection and meaning-making; implementation supports exploration, dialogue, play and the integration of registers of knowledge; evaluation examines experiential, reflective, epistemic and axiological progress and serves to self-regulate pedagogical intervention.

To operationalise the epistemological level, the *Individual Epistemic Profile of the Child* (IEPC) is conceptualised as expressing the dynamic configuration of empirical, artistic, scientific and mythico-religious registers in experiential contexts. The IEPC does not categorise the child; rather, it captures the distribution, temporary predominance and degree of integration of these registers in the process of meaning-making. Its analysis makes it possible to identify epistemic balance or imbalance and supports the adaptation of pedagogical intervention.

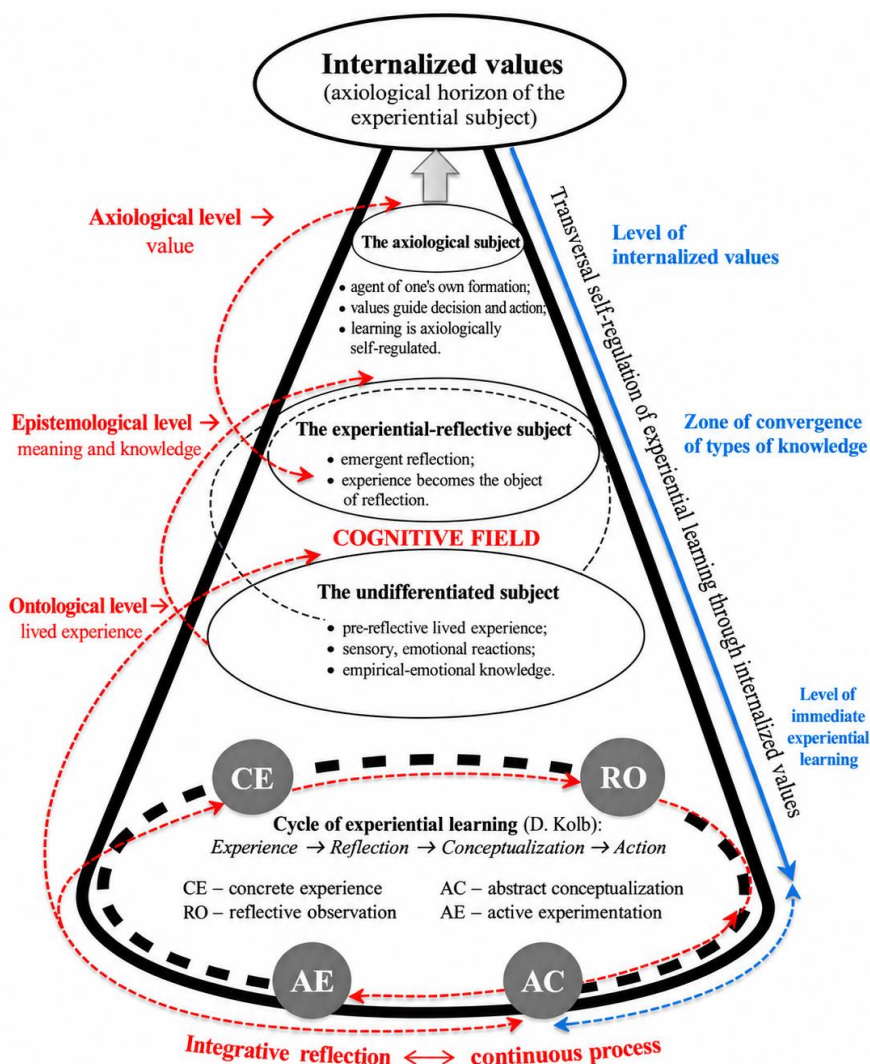


Figure 2.3. Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning

Complementarily, the *Epistemic Convergence Index* (ECI) is introduced to express the degree of balance in the distribution of the registers. Values approaching 1 indicate a more balanced distribution, whereas lower values signal marked predominance. The index does not measure performance within an isolated register but rather the extent of convergence among the registers, thus providing a composite indicator of the epistemological level of the PEL model.

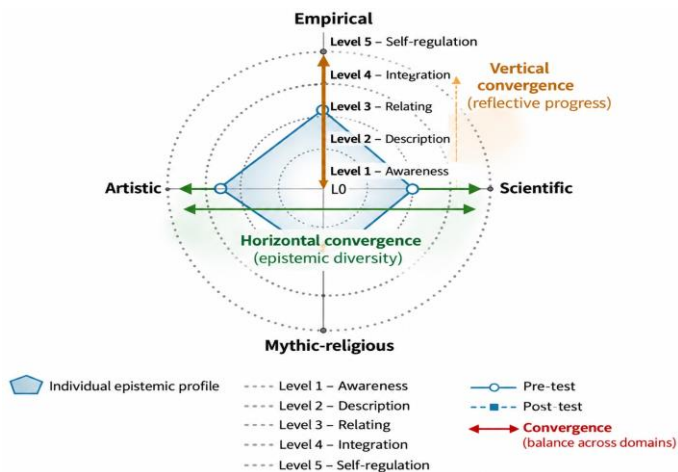


Figure 2.4. Modelling the Individual Epistemic Profile of the Preschool Child within the Framework of Preschool Experiential Learning

Modelling IEPC as a dynamic polygon enables the simultaneous representation of epistemic diversity and reflective progress. The four axes of the radar matrix correspond to the empirical, artistic, scientific and mythico-religious registers, while the reflective levels trace progression from awareness to description, relating, integration and self-regulation. The graphical configuration facilitates comparison of pre- and post-intervention development and provides educators with an intuitive tool for monitoring convergence and informing differentiated pedagogical decisions.

In conclusion, the convergence of types of knowledge constitutes an epistemological and psychopedagogical principle of preschool experiential learning, through which the plurality of empirical, artistic, scientific and symbolic registers is progressively articulated into a coherent structure of meaning. Reflection is reconceptualised as an emergent, continuous and transversal mechanism that interrelates the sensory, affective, cognitive and social dimensions of experience and supports the transition from lived experience to knowledge, valuation and self-regulation. The PEL pedagogical model integrates these foundations within a normative, structural and processual architecture, organised across the ontological, epistemological and axiological levels, while the IEPC and ECIP operationalise the epistemological dimension and enable analysis of the convergence of knowledge registers.

Chapter 3. The Experimental Investigation of Preschool Experiential Learning presents the organization and implementation of the pedagogical experiment aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the PEL Model in the integrated development of learning experiences at preschool age. During the initial assessment stage, the baseline levels of the experiential dimensions of learning (engagement, epistemological organization, reflection, and axiological emergence) and the relationships among them were assessed using standardized and author-developed methods and instruments (BASC, ICE, ISE, FARE, FCDR, FOMA). The formative stage focused on implementing the PEL Model through experientially structured learning activities, by creating psychopedagogical conditions conducive to reflection and the convergence of types of knowledge. The model, structured around the experiential, epistemic, reflective, and axiological dimensions, guided the activities towards transforming experience into meaningful knowledge and the internalization of values. During the post-intervention assessment stage, the effectiveness of the model was comparatively evaluated through quantitative and qualitative analysis of data obtained from the experimental and control groups, employing descriptive and correlational statistical analyses and graphical representations of changes in the indicators. The findings revealed significant improvements in experiential reflection, epistemic convergence, and axiological manifestations in the experimental groups, confirming the effectiveness of the Pedagogical Model of PEL.

The structure of the pedagogical experiment, including its stages, timeframe, purpose, objectives, methods and instruments, is summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Methodological Structure of the PEL Pedagogical Experiment

Baseline Assessment Stage (2021–2023) Purpose: To diagnose the initial levels of the experiential, epistemic and axiological dimensions of preschool learning, transversal reflective processing, and the structural relationships between the variables of the PEL pedagogical model.	
Objectives	Methods, instruments and techniques applied
1. Assessing children's initial levels of experiential engagement and cognitive, social and adaptive-behavioural functioning.	• Systematic psychopedagogical observation, operationalised through the criterion-descriptive grid of experiential engagement (epistemic and axiological extension); • Standardised psychometric instrument BASC-2 TRS 6/11 (Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition – Teacher Rating Scales) – a standardized behavioral assessment system for children, Second Edition, comprising rating scales completed by teachers; • Standardised sychometric instrument BASC-2 PRS 6/11 (Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition – Parent Rating Scales) – a standardized behavioral assessment system for children, Second Edition, comprising rating scales completed by parents; • Cognitive screening for children aged 5–7 years; • Socio-emotional screening for children aged 5–7 years.
2. Determining the level of epistemological organisation of experience.	• Semi-structured assessment instrument: <i>Analysis Form for Observed Epistemic Registers</i> (FARE), adapted from Piagetian-type developmental intervals.
3. Determining the level of reflective processing of experience.	• <i>Criterion-Descriptive Experiential Reflection Form</i> (FCDR).
4. Assessing the emergence and crystallisation of values.	• <i>Observation Form for Axiological Manifestations</i> (FOMA).
5. Verifying the structural coherence of the PEL model.	• Descriptive statistical analysis (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, percentage distributions); • Pearson correlation analysis; • <i>Analysis of Correlations between Aggregated Variables</i> (ACVA); • Graphical representation techniques (scatterplots, heatmap matrices); • Exploratory structural modelling.
Formative Intervention Stage (2023–2024) Purpose: To implement the pedagogical model of preschool experiential learning and harness the convergence of types of knowledge in organising educational experiences.	
Objectives	Methods, Instruments and Techniques Applied
6. Implementing the PEL pedagogical model within educational activities.	• Experimental pedagogical intervention through experiential activities organised according to Kolb's experiential cycle (AE–RO–AC–CE); • Implementation of a formative programme comprising 30 experiential activities and stimulus situations.
7. Fostering the convergence of epistemic registers in organising learning experiences.	• Integrated experiential activities aimed at the convergent activation of epistemic registers (empirical, artistic, proto-scientific, mythic-symbolic); • Stimulus situations and heuristic dialogue; • Matrix for monitoring convergence among epistemic registers.
8. Developing experiential reflection and axiological self-regulation.	• Age-appropriate reflective activities (reflective dialogue, symbolic interpretative storytelling); • Set of reflective questions inspired by the FARE protocol; • Age-appropriate reflection sheets.
9. Monitoring implementation fidelity and changes in experiential indicators.	• Systematic longitudinal pedagogical observation; • Longitudinal pedagogical observation form; • Individual Epistemic Profile of the Child (PEIC); • Descriptive analysis of changes in observed behaviours; • Graphical visualisations of epistemic profiles.
Post-Intervention Assessment Stage (2024–2025) Purpose: To assess the impact of the formative intervention and experimentally validate the PEL pedagogical model by comparing pre–post results and analysing differences between groups participating and not participating in the pedagogical intervention.	
Objectives	Methods, Instruments and Techniques Applied
10. Analysing changes in experiential indicators in the experimental groups (G1 and G2) by comparing pre–post results for each model dimension.	• Re-administration of instruments used at baseline (<i>Experiential Engagement Grid</i>, FARE, FCDR, FOMA, BASC-2 TRS, SCC-E 5/7, SCS-E 5/7, ICE, ISE); • Pre–post comparative statistical analysis; • Descriptive and interpretative analysis.
11. Comparing experiential, epistemic, reflective and axiological progress and additionally examining changes in	• Between-group comparative statistical analysis; • Analysis of composite indicators (ICE, ISE); • Comparative graphical representations; • BASC – Parent Rating Scales (PRS): longitudinal re-administration and

children's adaptive-social and behavioural-emotional functioning between experimental groups (G1, G2) and control groups (G3, G4).	pre-post comparative analysis of parental assessments; • Comparative analysis of mean scale scores and their changes (Δ pre-post); • Comparative graphical representations of behavioural-emotional and adaptive-social profiles.
12. Examining changes in structural relationships among the variables of the PEL pedagogical model.	• Post-intervention Pearson correlation analysis; comparative structural modelling.

The total research sample comprised 188 participants, including 90 children aged 5–7 years, 90 parents of these children, and 8 teachers. The experimental sample itself consisted of the 90 children, divided into four groups: two experimental groups – G1 (n = 23) and G2 (n = 22), from Kindergarten with Extended Programme No. 57, Constanța (Romania), and two control groups – G3 (n = 23) and G4 (n = 22), from Kindergarten with Extended Programme No. 33, Constanța (Romania). The 90 parents and 8 teachers participated as evaluators and complementary sources of data, contributing to the investigation of children's functioning in educational and family contexts. The parental assessment, conducted using the Parent Rating Scales (PRS) of the BASC system and administered during the initial assessment and post-intervention assessment stages, followed a longitudinal approach, providing a cross-contextual reference for analyzing individual and intergroup changes relative to the initial baseline. Assessment combined standardised instruments and instruments developed within the research: BASC-2 TRS/PRS, SCC-E 5/7, SCS-E 5/7, ICE, ISE, FARE, FCDR, and FOMA.

The baseline assessment stage sought to establish the initial profile of the experiential, cognitive-social, epistemic, reflective, and axiological dimensions and to examine their structural interrelationships. Variables derived from psychometric instruments and screening measures administered in educational settings were selected to assess cognitive and social functioning, while parental BASC-2 PRS results served a complementary, cross-contextual role.

To operationalise the cognitive and social variables relevant to the PEL model, the scales summarised in Table 3.2 were selected.

Table 3.2. Variables for Assessing the Cognitive and Social Dimensions

Variables for the Cognitive Dimension	Variables for the Social Dimension
• Learning Skills (adaptive scale) • Educational Cognitive Pedagogical (composite educational index) • Learning Problems	• Social Skills • Adaptability • Leadership • Educational Social Pedagogical • Withdrawal (reverse-scored) • Aggression (reverse-scored)

On the basis of these variables, two composite indices were constructed: the *Experiential Cognitive Index* (ICE), expressing the relationship between adaptive cognitive competencies and learning difficulties, and the *Experiential Social Index* (ISE), reflecting the balance between social competencies and maladaptive behavioural manifestations. Calculation employed standardised T-scores, with each variable contributing equally to the indices.

Table 3.3. Descriptive Statistical Parameters of the Experiential Cognitive Index (ICE) for the Experimental Sample

Indicator statistic	Value			
	Group 1 (n = 23)	Group 2 (n = 22)	Group 3 (n = 23)	Group 4 (n = 22)
Mean (M ₁)(M ₂)	52,5	57,3	44,6	49,0
Standard Deviation (SD ₁)(SD ₂)	34,7	19,4	13,9	12,1
Minimum	-45,5	-15,5	25,0	32,0
Maximum	73,5	78,0	66,0	72,0
Negative Values	3 children (13%)	1 child (4.5%)	0 children (0%)	0 children (0%)

At baseline, ICE means ranged from 44.6 to 57.3, indicating a moderately positive level of cognitive functioning. The experimental groups exhibited greater variability, particularly G1 (SD = 34.7). This is methodologically significant because the intervention was implemented with a group characterised by a more heterogeneous initial profile, including specific cognitive vulnerabilities.

Table 3.4. Descriptive Statistical Parameters of the Experiential Social Index (ESI) for the Experimental (G1 and G2) and Control (G3 and G4) Samples

Statistical indicator for ESI	Value			
	GROUP 1 (n = 23)	GROUP 2 (n = 22)	GROUP 3 (n = 23)	GROUP 4 (n = 22)
Mean (M ₁)(M ₂)	47,8	52,1	30,2	36,6
Standard deviation(SD ₁)(SD ₂)	27,6	18,3	12,9	16,1
Minimum	-28,0	-12,5	4,5	-2,0
Maximum	74,5	76,0	49,3	54,8
Negative values	2 children (8,7%)	1 child (4,5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4,5%)

Systematic psychopedagogical observation was employed to capture children’s manifestations in authentic learning situations. The Experiential Engagement Assessment Grid is grounded in the involvement model developed by F. Laevers [31] and was adapted by incorporating epistemic and axiological dimensions. The instrument comprises the experiential dimension (E), the epistemic dimension (EP), and the axiological dimension (AX), each operationalised through observational indicators.

Table 3.5. Results of the Experiential Engagement Assessment Grid across the Experiential (E), Epistemic (EP), and Axiological (AX) Dimensions – Baseline Assessment Stage

Group	n	Mean E	Mean EP	Mean AX	Overall Mean
G1	23	15,4	14,3	12,3	42,00
G2	22	19,1	17,1	14,1	50,30
G3	23	17,65	16,00	13,00	46,65
G4	22	18,50	16,50	13,50	48,50

The initial profile reveals a consistent pattern of E > EP > AX. The experiential dimension records the highest values, whereas the axiological dimension has the lowest mean scores, confirming the emergent nature of value-based self-regulation. This initial structure supports the premise that active participation is more accessible to children than epistemic organisation and the internalisation of values, dimensions that require reflective mediation and systematic pedagogical intervention.

Table 3.6. Comparison of FARE Mean Scores across Stimulus Situations at the Baseline Assessment Stage

Stimulus situation	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Difference
S1	40,5%	39,1%	35,8%	36,5%	4,7%
S2	40,5%	39,3%	35,5%	36,2%	5,0%
S3	39,5%	37,4%	34,8%	35,6%	4,7%
Mean	40,0%	38,6%	35,4%	36,1%	4,6%

The application of FARE reveals emerging epistemic convergence: children draw upon multiple registers of knowledge, yet the articulation of these registers into a coherent explanatory structure remains unstable and dependent on context and guidance. The maximum difference in group means is 4.6 percentage points, and the relative ordering is maintained across the three stimulus situations, supporting the consistency of the comparison baseline for the formative stage.

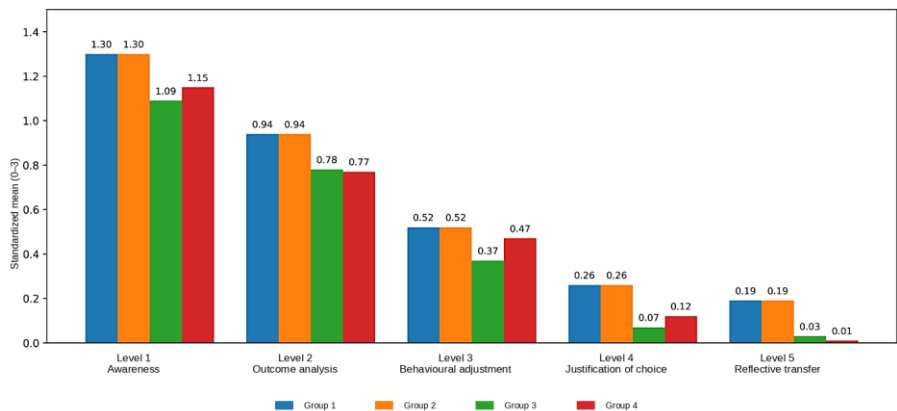


Figure 3.1. Level of Manifestation of Reflection among Preschool Children at the Baseline Assessment Stage

Figure 3.1 confirms the emergent profile of reflection: awareness and description of actions are more strongly represented, whereas behavioural adjustment, justification of choices, and reflective transfer display progressively lower values. This finding substantiates the need for an intervention aimed at developing higher-order reflective processing. Reflection is interpreted in continuity with D. A. Kolb's experiential learning model [47], but as a transversal process rather than merely an isolated stage of the cycle.

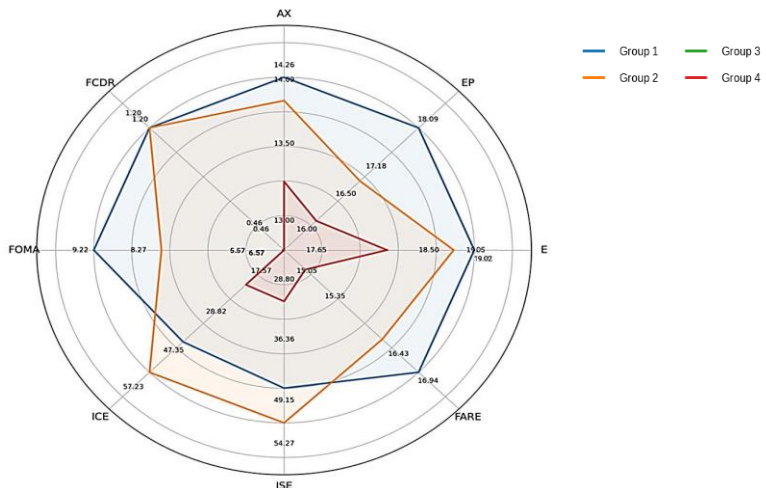


Figure 3.2. Comparative Structural Profile of the Aggregated Variables of the PEL Model (ACVA) at the Baseline Assessment Stage

The ACVA profile provides an integrated overview of the initial status of the E, EP, AX, FCDR, FOMA, ICE, ISE, and FARE variables. Their relationships were examined using Pearson correlation and distributional analyses. The resulting configuration indicates that the experiential and cognitive dimensions are more developed than the reflective and axiological dimensions, while the relationships between the levels of the model remain moderate. This supports the need to strengthen the links between experience, the organisation of meaning, reflection, and the attribution of value.

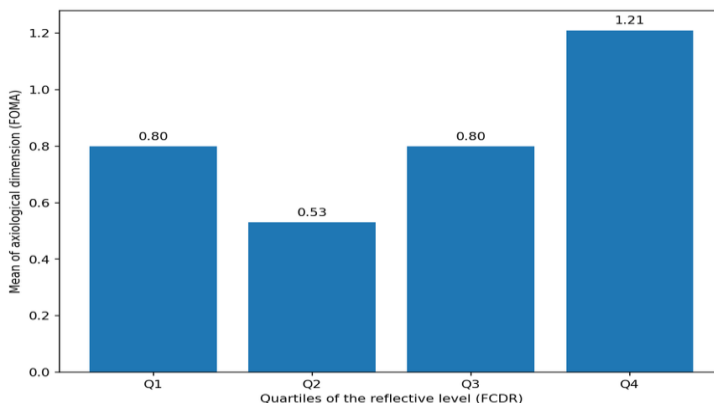


Figure 3.3. Progression of the axiological dimension (FOMA) across quartiles of the reflective level (FCDR) at the baseline assessment stage

A relevant finding of the baseline assessment stage is the moderate positive association between FCDR and FOMA ($r \approx 0.50$). FOMA mean scores do not increase linearly across all FCDR quartiles; however, the highest value occurs in the upper reflective quartile ($Q4 \approx 1.21$). This pattern indicates that reflection does not mechanically produce the internalisation of values, although more consolidated levels of reflection create more favourable conditions for the axiological stabilisation of experience. The distinction between the manifestation of values in context (AX) and their internalisation (FOMA) is therefore essential to interpreting the PEL model.

The formative stage sought to implement the PEL model systematically in experimental groups G1 and G2. The programme was integrated into curricular activities and comprised 30 progressively organised experiential learning activities and stimulus situations. The intervention drew upon direct experience, convergence of knowledge registers, reflection, and value transfer, in accordance with the principles of the PEL model and the reinterpretation of D. A. Kolb's experiential learning cycle [47].

Table 3.7. Methodological Sequence for Implementing the PEL Pedagogical Model

Stage	Central objective	Activities undertaken
1. Preparation of the pedagogical intervention	Designing the instructional framework for implementing the PEL model	- Developing lesson plans for experiential activities; - Integrating convergence of types of knowledge into activity structures; - Designing reflective situations and approaches to assigning value to experience; - Selecting educational resources and organising the learning environment.
2. Planning experiential learning in preschool education	Organising the formative programme and integrating the PEL model into the activity curriculum	- Structuring the formative programme into 30 experiential learning activities and stimulus situations; - Organising PEL activities into progressive modules; - Aligning experiential activities with Kolb's four-stage experiential cycle and the dimensions of the PEL pedagogical model (ontological—lived experience; epistemological—convergence of knowledge registers; axiological—emergence of values).
3. Implementation of the PEL pedagogical model	Applying the pedagogical intervention in educational activities	- Conducting experiential activities in experimental groups (G1 and G2); - Stimulating convergence among epistemic registers; - Developing reflection on experience; - Supporting the emergence of value-oriented behaviours in children's activities.
4. Evaluation of	Analysis of the	Analysis of pedagogical observations and the development of

the Formative Process and Interpretation of Results in Light of the Psychopedagogical Framework	outcomes of the pedagogical intervention and examination of how the psychopedagogical benchmarks of the PEL model are reflected in the organisation and implementation of experiential learning activities.	- experimental indicators; - Interpretation of developmental trends across the dimensions of the model (epistemic, reflective, and axiological); - Interpretation of experimental results in relation to the psychopedagogical benchmarks of the PEL model.
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The pedagogical intervention was structured in accordance with the logic of the PEL model, which entails the activation of experience, the organisation of meaning, and the emergence of the axiological dimension through reflection. Implementation followed a progressive methodological pathway oriented towards the planning, delivery, and evaluation of experiential learning situations.

The first stage focused on preparing the pedagogical intervention by establishing the instructional framework for implementing the PEL model. An annual thematic plan of experiential learning activities was developed for the oldest preschool group, organised as stimulus situations centred on direct experience and aimed at transforming that experience into meaning, knowledge, and value. The instructional plans were designed to progressively harness direct experience through reflection, the convergence of knowledge registers, and the transfer of values. Activities were organised progressively in accordance with the developmental domains of the curriculum, creating varied contexts for exploration, expression, and reflection (Figure 3.4).

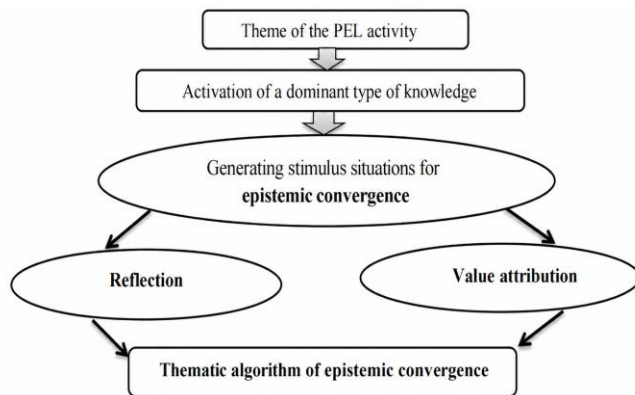


Figure 3.4. Thematic Algorithm of PEL Activities

The thematic algorithm involved selecting a relevant experiential theme, activating a dominant knowledge register, generating stimulus situations for epistemic convergence, integrating reflection, and assigning value to experience. The activities supported the transition from direct exploration to proto-scientific explanation, artistic expression, and symbolic interpretation, while reflection ensured the connection between experience and behavioural/social transfer. Through this structure, the intervention did not merely add isolated activities to the curriculum; rather, it pedagogically reorganised children's experiences around the mechanisms of the PEL model.

The post-intervention assessment stage sought to evaluate the impact of the formative intervention through two complementary approaches: a longitudinal analysis of the same participants (E1–E3) and a comparison between the experimental and control groups. The instruments used during baseline assessment were re-administered, and the data were analysed descriptively, comparatively, and correlationally. The interpretation emphasises the magnitude of progress and the coherence of changes across the model's dimensions, without conflating descriptive improvement with inferential evidence of statistical significance when the latter is not explicitly reported.

Table 3.8. Descriptive Statistical Parameters of the Experiential Social Index (ESI) – Post-Intervention Assessment Stage

Statistical indicator	GROUP 1 (n = 23)	GROUP 2 (n = 22)	GROUP 3 (n = 23)	GROUP 4 (n = 22)
Mean (M ₁) (M ₂)	60,8	64,3	33,4	39,5
Standard deviation (SD ₁) (SD ₂)	26,4	17,2	12,3	15,7
Minimum	5,0	18,0	10,0	4,0
Maximum	82,0	84,0	52,0	58,0
Negative values	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

At the post-intervention assessment stage, mean ESI scores reached 60.8 in G1 and 64.3 in G2, whereas G3 and G4 reached 33.4 and 39.5, respectively. The disappearance of negative values across all groups indicates an overall stabilisation of social functioning; however, the magnitude of progress was substantially greater in the groups that participated in the intervention.

Table 3.9. Comparison of Mean Experiential Indices (ICE and ISE) at the Baseline and Post-Intervention Assessment Stages

Group	ICE Baseline (Pre)	ICE Intervention Assessment (Post)	Δ ICE	ISE Baseline (Pre)	ISE Intervention Assessment (Post)	Δ ISE
G1 (experimental)	50,5	61,0	+10,5	47,8	60,8	+13,0
G2 (experimental)	57,4	66,2	+8,8	52,1	64,3	+12,2
G3 (control)	24,8	28,1	+3,3	30,2	33,4	+3,2
G4 (control)	32,6	35,2	+2,6	36,6	39,5	+2,9

This pattern confirms the strengthening of children's capacities for exploration, the cognitive organisation of experience, and the development of social competences in the context of implementing the PEL pedagogical model. By contrast, the control groups (G3 and G4), which did not participate in the formative programme, recorded only moderate increases in mean index scores (approximately 2–3 points), attributable to natural maturation processes and ordinary educational experiences in the preschool environment. The summary graphical representation in Figure 3.5 illustrates the development of the experiential indices ICE and ISE between the baseline assessment stage (Stage 1) and the post-intervention assessment stage (Stage 3) across all four groups. The chart presents both initial and final index values; each column explicitly indicates the final value and the magnitude of the increase (Δ) relative to baseline.

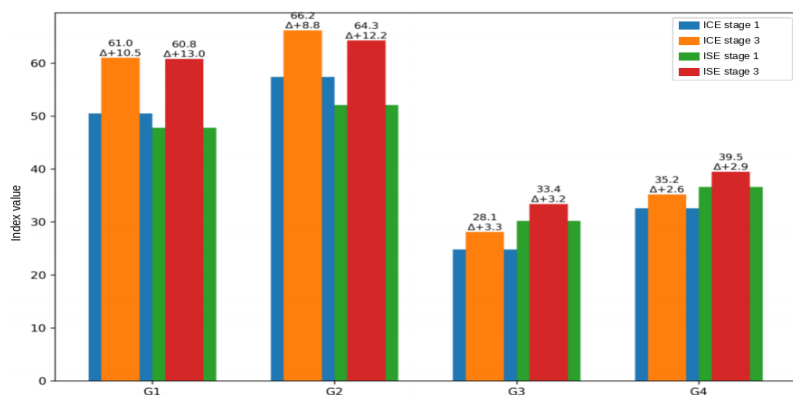


Figure 3.5. Summary of Changes in the Experiential Indices ICE and ISE across Assessment Stages

One of the clearest findings of the validation is the difference in the trajectories of ICE and ISE. In G1 and G2, ICE increased by +10.5 and +8.8 points, respectively, while ISE increased by +13.0 and +12.2 points. In G3 and G4, the increases were considerably smaller: ICE +3.3 and +2.6; ISE +3.2 and +2.9. This finding indicates more pronounced development of children's capacities for exploration and the cognitive organisation of experience, accompanied by the consolidation of social competences, in the groups participating in the formative programme.

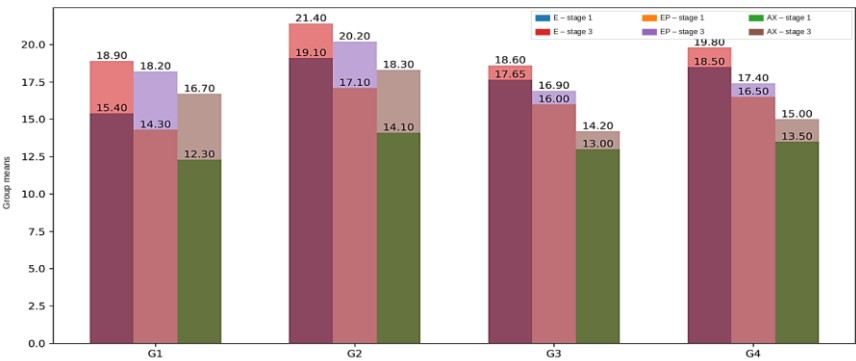


Figure 3.6. Dimensions of Experiential Engagement (E, EP, AX) between Stages 1 and 3

The progression recorded by the engagement assessment grid indicates that improvement was more pronounced in the epistemic and axiological dimensions of the experimental groups. In G1, E increased from 15.4 to 18.9, EP from 14.3 to 18.2, and AX from 12.3 to 16.7; in G2, E increased from 19.1 to 21.4, EP from 17.1 to 20.2, and AX from 14.1 to 18.3. In G3 and G4, the increases were smaller. This pattern is important for the thesis because it demonstrates that the intervention enhanced not only active participation, but, more importantly, the organisation of meaning and the value-oriented dimension of experience.

Regarding reflection and the internalisation of values, the pre-post analysis reveals a pedagogically significant differentiation. Experiential reflection develops across all groups; however, its transformation into axiological internalisation is considerably more pronounced in the experimental groups. This relationship supports the central proposition of the model: reflection is necessary, but values become consolidated through experiences that are structured, endowed with meaning, and transferred across recurring educational contexts.

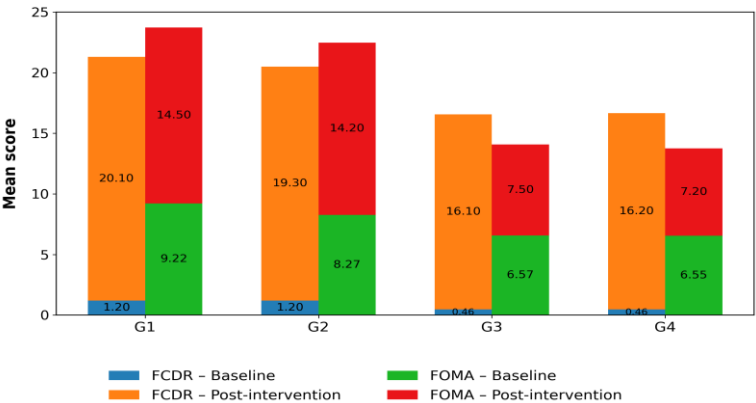


Figure 3.7. Graphical Representation of Changes (Δ) in the FCDR and FOMA Variables in the Experimental and Control Groups

Figure 3.7 shows that FOMA increased by +5.3 in G1 and +5.9 in G2, compared with +0.9 in G3 and +0.7 in G4. This is one of the notable findings of the research: the manifestation of values in a given situation does not automatically lead to their internalisation, while the difference between the experimental and control groups indicates the role of pedagogical mediation, reflection, and experiential consolidation in the transition from context-dependent value-oriented behaviours to more stable axiological reference points.

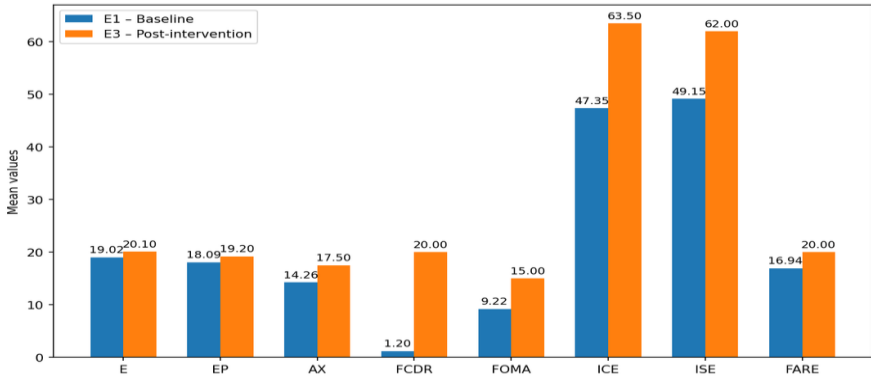


Figure 3.8. Comparison of E1 (Baseline Assessment Stage) and E3 (Post-Intervention Assessment Stage) Results for the ACVA Variables

The integrated analysis of the aggregated variables reveals a favourable development across the entire architecture of the PEL model. For the aggregated G1–G2 means, E increased from 17.21 to 20.12 ($\Delta = +2.91$), EP from 15.67 to 19.18 ($\Delta = +3.51$), AX from 13.18 to 17.48 ($\Delta = +4.30$), FOMA from 8.76 to 14.35 ($\Delta = +5.60$), ICE from 53.87 to 63.54 ($\Delta = +9.67$), ISE from 49.90 to 62.51 ($\Delta = +12.61$), and FARE from 16.91 to 19.91 ($\Delta = +3.00$). These results indicate more pronounced development of the reflective, axiological, cognitive, and social dimensions in the experimental groups and should be interpreted alongside the differences observed in the control groups.

From a structural perspective, the findings support the formative sequence proposed by the PEL model: experience → epistemic engagement → value manifestation → experiential reflection → epistemic convergence → axiological internalisation. The reconfiguration of the ACVA profile between baseline and post-intervention assessment indicates more coherent relationships among the experiential, epistemic, reflective, and axiological dimensions, providing a central argument for the functional validation of the model.

Experimental findings: ICE increased by +10.5 (G1) and +8.8 (G2) in the experimental groups, compared with +3.3 and +2.6 in the control groups; ISE increased by +13.0 (G1) and +12.2 (G2), compared with +3.2 and +2.9 in the control groups; the epistemic and axiological dimensions progressed more markedly in G1 and G2; axiological internalisation measured by FOMA showed a clear differentiation, increasing by +5.3 and +5.9 in the experimental groups, compared with +0.9 and +0.7 in the control groups. The convergence of epistemic registers and the coherence of the relationships among the model variables were strengthened, supporting the transition from lived experience to meaning and value.

The pedagogical experiment confirmed the usefulness of the PEL framework for systematically organising learning experiences at preschool age. The baseline assessment identified an initial profile dominated by experiential participation and empirical registers, with reflection, epistemic convergence, and axiological internalisation still emerging. The formative stage operationalised the model through 30 activities and stimulus situations organised around direct experience, reflection, the convergence of knowledge, and the attribution of value. The post-intervention assessment revealed a more pronounced development of cognitive, social, epistemic, and axiological indicators in the experimental groups than in the control groups.

The most relevant findings supporting the hypothesis are the differences in ICE and ISE gains, the progression of the EP and AX dimensions, and the gap between experimental and control groups in FOMA axiological internalisation. These results support the central role of experiential reflection in

the organisation of meaning and demonstrate that the formative value of experience does not arise from mere participation in activities, but from pedagogical mediation of the relationship between lived experience, reflection, epistemic convergence, and value transfer. Accordingly, the PEL model provides a coherent framework for designing, implementing, and evaluating preschool experiential learning.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research provided a theoretical and methodological foundation for of PEL through the analysis of the conceptual and regulatory framework, the examination of the epistemic and axiological dimensions, the identification of psychopedagogical foundations, and the development, implementation, and experimental validation of the Pedagogical Model of PEL. The research findings led to the following general conclusions:

1. The analysis of experiential learning theories, from classical philosophical conceptions to contemporary psychopedagogical perspectives, highlighted the role of direct experience, action, reflection, and social interaction in knowledge construction, as well as the limitations of existing models in relation to the developmental characteristics of preschool children. The *cognitive field* was theoretically substantiated as a space of interaction between the prehension and transformation of experience, facilitating the reflective organization of knowledge and meaning-making. The comparative analysis of curricular documents from the Republic of Moldova and Romania revealed the insufficient explicit articulation of the epistemological and axiological mechanisms of PEL, thus justifying the need for specific psychopedagogical foundations.

2. The examination of the epistemological and axiological dimensions provided a theoretical foundation for the *convergence of types of knowledge* as a mechanism for integrating empirical, artistic, mythic-symbolic, and proto-scientific epistemic registers, in accordance with Vl. Pâslaru's theoretical conception. Their articulation through perception, action, emotion, symbolization, and explanation in the process of meaning-making was highlighted. The axiological dimension was substantiated by explaining the attribution of value-related meanings to lived experiences and the progressive internalization of values in children's attitudes, choices, and behaviours.

3. The *psychopedagogical foundations of PEL* were identified and systematized: the educational valorization of direct, holistic, and sensory-affective experiences; the organization of authentic and secure educational contexts; reflective mediation; the convergence of types of knowledge; the emergence and internalization of values; and the development of children's self-regulation and autonomy in learning. Reflection was theoretically substantiated as a *transversal integrative mechanism* through which experience is transformed into knowledge, meaning, and value. The articulation of these foundations with the ontological, epistemological, and axiological levels provided the basis for the development of the pedagogical model.

4. The *Pedagogical Model of PEL* was developed through the reinterpretation and further development of D. A. Kolb's theoretical conception, structured around the normative, structural, and processual dimensions and the *ontological, epistemological* and *axiological* levels. The originality of the model lies in the integration of the cognitive field, the reconceptualization of reflection as a continuous, recurrent process and a transversal integrative mechanism, and the theoretical substantiation of the progressive internalization of values as an axiological outcome. Six specific principles and four interdependent stage – s preparation, design, implementation, and assessment of the learning experience – were formulated and adapted to preschool development. The model provides an integrative framework for transforming experience into knowledge, meaning, and value.

5. The operationalization of the model involved the development of PEL quality indicators, correlated with the processual stages and structural levels, for assessing experiential engagement, reflection, knowledge organization, and epistemic convergence. Four levels of reflection were identified – situational-emotional, emerging relational, organizational, and incipient self-regulatory – along with five assessment criteria: awareness of action, analysis of outcomes, behavioural adjustment, justification of choices, and reflective transfer. The *Child's Individual Epistemic Profile* (PEIC) and the *Epistemic Convergence Index* (ICEp) were conceptualized, facilitating progress monitoring and the substantiation of differentiated pedagogical interventions.

6. Within the experimental research, specific instruments for investigating and assessing PEL were developed, adapted, and applied – the *Experiential Engagement Assessment Grid*, *Observed Epistemic Registers Analysis Form* (FARE), *Criterion-Descriptive Reflection Assessment Form* (FCDR), *Axiological Manifestations Observation Form* (FOMA), *Experiential Cognitive Index* (ICE), and *Experiential Social Index* (ISE) – enabling the multidimensional assessment of preschool children. The experimental validation of the Pedagogical Model of PEL was carried out through the

implementation of a formative programme comprising 30 instructional sequences and stimulus situations over one preschool academic year. The multidimensional assessment employed the developed and adapted instruments: the Experiential Engagement Assessment Grid, FARE, FCDR, FOMA, ICE, and ISE. The comparative analysis of the experimental and control groups, complemented by *Correlational Analysis of Aggregated Variables* (ACVA), revealed progress in experiential engagement, epistemic organization, reflection, the convergence of types of knowledge, and axiological manifestations. The findings supported the research hypothesis and confirmed the functionality and effectiveness of the model within the investigated educational context.

To further deepen understanding of the topic investigated, the following **recommendations** were formulated:

For future research:

- Extend investigations into the epistemological mechanisms of experiential learning, with particular emphasis on analysing the convergence of types of knowledge at different developmental stages;
- Deepen research on the role of reflection in early childhood education by developing specific operational models and assessment instruments;
- Adapt and validate the PEL pedagogical model in diverse educational contexts (other levels of education and intercultural settings).

For early childhood educators:

- Design educational activities centred on children's direct experience, making use of exploration, interaction, and discovery;
- Systematically integrate reflection into teaching practice through guiding questions, dialogue, and verbalisation activities;
- Use specific assessment instruments (FARE, FCDR, FOMA, ICE, ISE) to monitor learning progress.

For managers and curriculum/methodology specialists in early childhood education institutions:

- Support the implementation of experiential learning by creating a stimulating educational environment centred on exploration and reflection;
- Organise professional learning communities and methodological activities devoted to experiential learning;
- Integrate the PEL pedagogical model into institutional strategies and management documents;
- Monitor the quality of the educational process using indicators specific to experiential learning.

For teaching staff:

- Integrate experiential learning models into initial teacher education;
- Develop competences in designing and implementing experiential activities;
- Align initial teacher education with the requirements of educational practice.

For trainers in the continuing professional development system:

- Develop training programmes centred on experiential learning;
- Train educators in the use of assessment instruments;
- Promote models of good practice and the exchange of professional experience.

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ADNOTARE

**Enache Amalia, „Repere psihopedagogice ale învățării experiențiale preșcolare”,
Teză de doctor în științe ale educației, Chișinău, 2026**

Structura tezei: Introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie cu 171 de titluri, 87 de anexe, 141 de pagini de text de bază, 26 de figuri și 23 de tabele. Rezultatele cercetării sunt publicate în 20 de lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: învățare experiențială, reflecție experiențială, câmp cognitiv, convergența tipurilor de cunoaștere, convergență epistemică, dimensiune axiologică, model pedagogic ÎEP.

Scopul cercetării: identificarea și valorificarea reperelor psihopedagogice ale învățării experiențiale preșcolare din perspectiva dimensiunilor epistemică și axiologică, prin reinterpretarea modelului învățării experiențiale elaborat de D. A. Kolb.

Obiectivele cercetării: analiza și sistematizarea fundamentelor conceptuale și a cadrului normativ pentru învățarea experiențială în educația preșcolară; examinarea dimensiunilor epistemică și axiologică ale învățării experiențiale preșcolare, din perspectiva convergenței tipurilor de cunoaștere; determinarea reperelor psihopedagogice ale învățării experiențiale preșcolare, din perspectiva convergenței tipurilor de cunoaștere și a valorificării experienței copilului; elaborarea *Modelului pedagogic al învățării experiențiale preșcolare* în baza reperelor psihopedagogice fundamentate teoretic; implementarea și validarea experimentală a *Modelului pedagogic al învățării experiențiale preșcolare*.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică rezidă în fundamentarea psihopedagogică a ÎEP din perspective epistemologică, reflexivă și axiologică; conceptualizarea câmpului cognitiv și a convergenței tipurilor de cunoaștere în construirea sensului; determinarea reperelor psihopedagogice; reconceptualizarea reflecției ca proces continuu și mecanism integrator transversal; elaborarea și validarea Modelului pedagogic ÎEP prin dezvoltarea concepției lui D. A. Kolb, articularea nivelurilor ontologic, epistemologic și axiologic și fundamentarea internalizării valorilor ca finalitate axiologică.

Rezultatele obținute care contribuie la soluționarea problemei științifice constau în determinarea și fundamentarea reperelor psihopedagogice ale ÎEP, care explicitează transformarea experienței în cunoaștere, sens și valoare; fundamentarea relațiilor funcționale dintre experiență, reflecție, convergența tipurilor de cunoaștere și constituirea valorilor; elaborarea și operaționalizarea Modelului pedagogic ÎEP; validarea experimentală a aplicabilității și eficacității acestuia în contextul educațional investigat.

Semnificația teoretică constă în clarificarea statutului învățării experiențiale ca tip distinct de cunoaștere în educația timpurie și dezvoltarea cadrului psihopedagogic al ÎEP prin clarificarea relațiilor dintre experiență, reflecție, convergența tipurilor de cunoaștere, construirea sensului și constituirea valorilor; articularea nivelurilor ontologic, epistemologic și axiologic; fundamentarea reflecției ca proces evolutiv și mecanism transversal, precum și a internalizării progresive a valorilor ca finalitate formativă.

Valoarea aplicativă constă în elaborarea și implementarea Modelului pedagogic ÎEP și a unui program formativ de 30 de secvențe didactice și situații-stimul, desfășurat pe parcursul unui an de învățământ preșcolar; elaborarea indicatorilor de calitate și a instrumentelor de evaluare – Grila implicării experiențiale, FARE, FCDR, FOMA, ICE și ISE; conceptualizarea profilului epistemic individual al copilului (PEIC) și a indicelui de convergență epistemică (ICEp), precum și aplicarea analizei corelaționale a variabilelor agregate (ACVA).

Implementarea rezultatelor a fost realizată prin experiment pedagogic în Grădinițele cu program prelungit nr. 57 și nr. 33 din Constanța, România.

ANNOTATION

Enache Amalia, “Psychopedagogical Foundations of Experiential Learning in Preschool Education”, Doctoral Thesis in Education Sciences, Chişinău, 2026

Thesis structure: Introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography comprising 171 references, 87 appendices, 141 pages of main text, 26 figures, and 23 tables. The research findings have been published in 20 scholarly works.

Keywords: experiential learning, experiential reflection, cognitive field, convergence of types of knowledge, epistemic convergence, axiological dimension, pedagogical model of preschool experiential learning (PEL).

Research aim: to identify and apply the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning from the perspective of its epistemic and axiological dimensions, through a reinterpretation of the experiential learning model developed by D. A. Kolb.

Research objectives: to analyze and systematize the conceptual foundations and regulatory framework of experiential learning in preschool education; to examine the epistemic and axiological dimensions of preschool experiential learning from the perspective of the convergence of types of knowledge; to identify the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning from the perspective of the convergence of types of knowledge and the valorization of the child's experience; to develop the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning* based on theoretically substantiated psychopedagogical foundations; to implement and experimentally validate the *Pedagogical Model of Preschool Experiential Learning*.

Scientific novelty and originality lie in establishing the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning from epistemological, reflective, and axiological perspectives; conceptualising the cognitive field and the convergence of types of knowledge in meaning-making; identifying the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning; reconceptualising reflection as a continuous process and a transversal integrative mechanism; developing and validating the PEL pedagogical model by extending D. A. Kolb's conceptual framework, integrating the ontological, epistemological, and axiological levels, and establishing the progressive internalisation of values as an axiological educational outcome.

Research findings contributing to the resolution of the scientific problem include identifying and theoretically substantiating the psychopedagogical foundations of preschool experiential learning, which explain the transformation of experience into knowledge, meaning, and value; establishing the functional relationships between experience, reflection, the convergence of types of knowledge, and the formation of values; developing and operationalising the PEL pedagogical model; and experimentally validating its applicability and effectiveness in the educational context investigated.

Theoretical significance lies in clarifying the status of experiential learning as a distinct form of knowledge acquisition in early childhood education and advancing the psychopedagogical framework of preschool experiential learning by elucidating the relationships between experience, reflection, the convergence of types of knowledge, meaning-making, and the formation of values; integrating the ontological, epistemological, and axiological levels; and substantiating reflection as a developmental process and transversal mechanism, alongside the progressive internalisation of values as a formative outcome.

Practical value lies in developing and implementing the PEL pedagogical model and a formative programme comprising 30 instructional sequences and stimulus situations, conducted over one preschool academic year; developing quality indicators and assessment instruments, including the Experiential Engagement Assessment Grid, FARE, FCDR, FOMA, ICE, and ISE; conceptualising the Child's Individual Epistemic Profile (PEIC) and the Epistemic Convergence Index (ICEp); and applying Correlational Analysis of Aggregated Variables (ACVA).

Implementation of the research findings was carried out through a pedagogical experiment at Extended-Day Kindergartens No. 57 and No. 33 in Constanța, Romania.

ENACHE AMALIA

**PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF
PRESCHOOL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

532.01 – Preschool Didactics

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