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TEACHERS AND THE FORMATION OF GENDER IDENTITY IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A STUDY WITH TEACHERS OF A MUNICIPAL SCHOOL IN GURUPI-TO

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ABSTRACT

The literature points out that the theme of gender identity, in the school context, even though it is a current and important theme, is still a little debated and explored. The purpose of this article was to investigate, together with primary school teachers, their perceptions about this theme in the school context of the 6th to 9th-grade elementary school, as well to find out the occurrence of curricular training that contemplates the theme of gender study and identify possible actions of approach about the theme. Eleven teachers who taught from the 6th to the 9th grade of Elementary School of a Gurupi-Tocantins municipal institution participated in the study, which was submitted to an interview script with semi-structured questions. For the analysis of the data, we used content analysis with thematic axes. Through this study, the analysis of the interviews highlighted five thematic categories: Gender identity; Relationship Family, student, and school; Religion as a symbol of social regulation; Training and Information and; Bullying and Violence. The formation of gender identity, as well as their perceptions regarding the subject addressed, proved to be a controversial and delicate subject to be discussed in the classroom context since it involves school, family, religion, lack of knowledge and prejudice. Gender identity is characterized as a controversial issue in society in general and in school is no different, which requires demystifying some obscure points about gender identity and teacher preparation.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender and its concept have been widely debated in society, configuring itself as a theme that brings questions and reflections, mainly because they are linked to social representations and practices. In its definition, gender corresponds to the condition of being male, female or neutral, in this case, neutral, when it does not refer to any of the genders. The definition of sex refers to the biological aspects of masculinity and femininity, while gender covers the psychological, behavioral, social and cultural aspects of being male or female [1]. About gender attitude, human beings grow by hearing that girls can't play with toy soft boy sand boys can't play with girls' toys, thus reinforcing that each sex is born predetermined for biological-related choices. Regarding the issues of social roles that men and women play, these roles are subject to representations marked by sexual differences between males and females. Those born with male biological sex will have their representation coined to play the role of man, and those born with female biological sex will have their representation determined to be a woman.

They are not exactly sexual characteristics, but the way they are represented or valued, what is said or think about these sexual characteristics that will constitute, in fact, what is feminine or male in a given society and at a given time Historic. To understand about the place and relationships that men and women occupy in society, it is important to observe everything that has been socially constructed about the sexes, from this the debate will be constituted through anew language, where gender will be a concept fundamental [2]. In this context, the delimited model of representation for males and women was constituted, which results in a rigid and Polarized construction, given, in the eminence of another model of being of the individual who doesn't meet this parameter, has been a reason, in the relationships, hostile behaviors, aversive and violence in various ways. The consequences of attitudes of this type of polarized perception cause suffering and trauma, constitute a problematic problem. In the school space, in the formation phase of the final grades of elementary school, it is common for young adolescents to present conflicting behaviors, in which the manifestation of diversity as to gender identity is commonly the cause of

laughter, jokes, and bullying [3]. Corroborating this sense, Lins et. al. (2016) [4] point out that in the school environment several forms of gender violence have been disseminated among young people, always in order to attack the victim when it manifests any difference in relation to the pattern of heteronormativity. What usually has not occurred is the problematization of the behavior of those who offend, expose and ridicule the other. In view of this theme, the research presents as questioning, the possible perception of the teacher regent of class about the formation of gender identity in the education of elementary school in youth. It is assumed that it would be up to the teacher to know how to deal with situations of conflicts existing in the school environment related to gender identity, see king to show that the reality of each person must be respected so that the construction of the identities of each one(a) is developed with minimal suffering. It is also assumed that most elementary school teachers have difficulty working on the formation of gender identity due to unpreparedness sand/or social pressures of the school environment, or family members. Thus, there is a need to deepen knowledge about the construction of gender identity and the teacher's relationship in the process of training students and in less conflicting school social interaction. Thus, the objective was to investigate with elementary school teachers II what their perceptions about work with the relationships of gender identity formation in the school context from 6th to 9th grade. In addition, it is proposed to investigate the occurrence of curricular training that includes the theme of study regarding gender identity, in practice, of the classroom; identify with teachers whether there were practices of reproduction of prejudice, bullying, and discrimination resulting from behavior and polarized discourse regarding the formation of gender identity experienced by students in the daily life of the classroom.

School I and Elementary School II. The educational institution has 40 (forty) teachers, of which approximately 27 (twenty-seven) are teachers in Elementary School II. Eleven teachers participated voluntarily in the survey. Before the collection, a meeting was held with the professors for a general explanation of the benefits and objectives of the research for the participants, the academy and the society. A room was reserved for individual interviews on the day scheduled with the teachers, the objectives and procedures were clarified, was read and signed the Informed Consent Form. The semi-structured interviews were recorded in audio, with the authorization of the participants, to facilitate the interaction with the investigated subjects and the reliability of the answers for later analysis of the data. To return the results of this research, the workshop was proposed on the subject, for the teachers participating in the research and others who expressed interest participating in the return. It is worth mentioning that the researchers followed ethical principles, thus maintaining the confidentiality and identity of the research subjects. According to Resolution 466/2012, prioritized the dignity, freedom, and autonomy of the individual participating in the research. School teachers who agreed to participate in the research were included in the sample; signed the informed consent form; attended the interview date and are teachers from the 6th to the 9th grade of elementary school. The criteria for the participating school were: to be located in the urban perimeter; require such intervention and; provide physical space for research with your teachers. Participants who did not express interest, those who dropped out of the survey or who did not respond to the entire interview were excluded and the criteria for exclusion from the location were: private schools or schools located outside the urban perimeter. Rapport was performed to minimize any discomfort, should it arise.

Table 1. Sociodemographic data of the sample

Teachers	Sex	Age	Schooling	Religion	Time/acting in the profession
P1	M	59	Full graduate (Specialization)	Catholic	21 years
P2	F	45	Full graduate (Specialization)	Evangelical	21 years
P3	F	40	Full graduate (Specialization)	Catholic	14 years
P4	F	52	Full graduate (Specialization)	Evangelical	21 years
P5	F	36	Full postgraduate (Specialization)	Jehovah's Witness	18 years
P6	F	32	Full Superior	There's no religion	12 years
P7	F	44	Full graduate (Specialization)	Catholic	27 years
P8	F	40	Full graduate (Specialization)	Evangelical	14 years
P9	F	33	Full graduate (Specialization)	Evangelical (Don't follow)	11 years
P10	F	45	Full graduate (Specialization)	Catholic	18 years
P11	M	33	Full graduate (Specialization)	Catholic	10 years

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is characterized as applied research, descriptive-exploratory, qualitative in nature developed in the field and in a transversal way. The research began after approval by the Research Ethics Committee, with opinion number 2.320.367. The research site was a municipal school, located in the city of Gurupi, a southern region of the state of the Tocantins, which has 487 students in Early Childhood Education, Elementary

The researchers made it clear that the subject would not need to answer any questions if he felt it would be too personal or cause embarrassment when speaking. The content of the interviews was transcribed in full and analyzed according to the parameters of content analysis in thematic axes [5] [6]. In this technique, successive readings and re-readings of the transcribed report were carried out, selection of relevant passages, seeking to identify emerging content in the interviewees' reports, identification of registration units and

contexts, construction of thematic categories, an organization in a coherent, with their search objectives and theoretical interpretation of thematic categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to analyze with teachers of a Gurupi municipal school, what their perceptions about the formation of gender identity in the education of elementary school youth from 6th to 9th grade. 11 teachers answered the survey. The sociodemographic data of the participants who responded to the research are summarized below in Table 1, with the following variables: gender, age, schooling, religion and time of action in the profession. As observed in Table 1, 81% (9) of the participants of the research, are female, aged between 32 and 52 years, and only 18% (2) male. Regarding training, 90% (10) of the participants declared to have higher education and specialization, only 9% (1) stated that they had a higher education course, but has no specialization. Regarding the time of action as a teacher, it was found that 27% (3) has been operating for 21 years, 9% (1) for 27 years, 18% (2) have been in the profession for 18 years, 18% (2) for 14 years and 27% (3) are between 10 and 12 years acting as teachers. Regarding religion, it was found that 45% (5) teachers declared themselves Catholic, 27% (3) evangelicals, 9% (1) of evangelical formation, but does not follow, 9% (1) Jehovah's Witness and 9% (1) declared that they had no religion. The data show that 91% (10) of the interviewees assume a religious formation. In the schooling category, it is perceived that most interviewees have some kind of specialization, however, none of these specializations concern gender studies. This gap in the training of these teachers leads to the question of whether this lack of training would be the inefficiency of the educational system, which does not provide training and updating support for teachers. As regimented in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education - LDB (1996) [7] is assured to professionals of continuing professional improvement education promoting the appreciation of the category. It is possible to notice that regard less of the time of action in the profession (between 10 and 27 years), and the age (between 32 and 59), these professionals have never received training that would enable them to work gender in school. It is understood the importance of the teacher seeking to renew his repertoire of knowledge to adapt to the changes and evolutions that occur in the school context. Regarding the gender of the eleven interviewees, two are male and opined favorable to the discussion about gender identity in school, and one of them emphasizes the need for teachers to receive training to understand gender, so free of prejudices, debate with students on the subject. Nine participants in the study belong to the female gender and answered that the school should inform, but not to emphasize the subject too much so as not to interfere in the sexuality of students.

Gender identity: The conception about gender identity perceived in the statements of nine of the interviewees understands that this is controversial and delicate to be discussed in the context of the classroom. The recurrence of terms with the "new", "distant", "this", "this subject", reinforce that the theme is seen with a certain distancing, as suggested by the following excerpts:

"[...] It's being a very new topic today, being debated, in the media." P1 *"[...] It's a subject that gets more and more into the reality of school." P3*

"[...] So far, I wouldn't dare (laugh) to say anything, because it's complicated, very complicated. This is a very complicated, delicate theme." P7

The school often considers a "supreme aggression" when it perceives the flexibilization of gender and sexuality models that it recognizes in its school environment, since as an institution acts as a regulator of the behaviors of individuals, as well as reproduces the conceptions of gender and sexuality that circulate in society [2].

"[...] it's a subject that's there, right, we want it or not, ta a, it's in the media, it's in society, it's growing every day. I do not agree with the policy of introducing right into school as part of training, I think interferes yes, in the life of a child who is starting a school life, [...] I wouldn't want an 8-year-old child of mine, 7 years, 10 years, as I have in school, to learn that... that this was something... that he could think that way today right, accept to him that he might have, let's assume, tomorrow if you don't want to be like this anymore, you can be otherwise, understand?" P8

Another aspect perceived and that the speech of P8 exemplifies, but that also arose in the responses of other teachers, is the preconception about gender identity as being a practice of induction. In P8 reasoning is believed that studies on gender identity would be to change a child's sexual orientation; in this form of understanding, it is perceived that there is an understanding about what the literature describes on the subject describes.

About postures involving preconception, in the understanding [8]:

"[...] the so-called identity crisis is seen as part of a broader process of change, which is shifting the central structures and processes of modern societies and shaking the reference framework that gave individuals a stable anchorage in the social world (p. 12).

Thus, in view of the current context, speaking and gender identity is not only remembering the old conventions that delimited only as synonymous male or female. Also, there has been resistance in education to promote discussion about gender identity as a content linked to the integral training of students, precisely because there is an understanding that concerns only sexual behavior, which greatly delimits the concept of gender [4].

"[...] we had no training in relation to this subject right, to work in schools because if the school is going to play the role right, in this case, it would inform the students right, but does not emphasize much not to interfere with the sexuality of students [...]" P7

In the interviewee's discourses, 2 consider that the discussion about gender identity should not enter school under any circumstances, 7 are favorable, as long as there is no deepening in the approach not to interfere in sexuality. This data refers again to a misunderstanding about the scope of the term gender, restricting it to sexuality. Louro (2003) [2] describes gender as the construction of broad meanings that apply to the various contexts of the person, it doesn't only concern sexuality, but to the various spaces and social and interpersonal relationships that the person lives. If in the

school environment, at a time when the person is respected in his social representation, without the rigid delimitation of social roles for man and woman, in this sense gender is discussed.

Family Relationship, Student and school: It is apparent from the statements of six of the interviewees that most of them consider that dealing with the family is the greatest difficulty when dealing with gender identity issues in the school environment, consider that when assuming this responsibility the school would place itself in a position of greater vulnerability. Thus, they understand that from the moment the school inserts in to its programmatic content the issues about gender identity, create conflicting situations with families because the school has to deal with the misunderstanding and/or ignorance of many families who do not understand their role as an advisor. Sometimes they clarify the interviewees, that many families end up understanding that the school would be interfering or influencing the sexuality of their children.

"[...] This role is family, because in my view when school she does this interference, in the sixth-year last semester we worked on sexuality we had problems with parents because, the information she was distorted, and the father when he feels assaulted in the, he doesn't care if you're passing on a possible or negative information to his son." P2

The idea expressed in the statements of most interviewees reveals that the gender identity of students in a particular subject, emphasizing the discourse that the school is about to transmit knowledge and content of other areas. Therefore, they are motivated to exclude knowledge about gender identity as an important theoretical contribution to the integral formation of the person.

"[...] Maybe even teachers can't work because of the parents' issue, a lot of concern for parents, as the child will take this matter from the room home. So, if you're going to approach such a topic, sometimes we don't know how it really goes and how that dad goes to school interpret the way they think they want too [...]" P3

In this conception, the school exempts itself from the responsibility that is attributed in the LDB of National Education [7] by determining that the right to the person of basic education, that the State, the family, with the collaboration of society should promote and encourage not only the preparation and training for citizenship as the full development of the individual.

Studies on gender identity can't be considered as an indisputable theme at school [9]. This belief that the decision on the student's gender identity and even sexual identity concerns only families exclude the school as an institution that is part of the person's integral training. The school cancels itself from the responsibility of creating dialogical relationships with families that at first would be the main partners that the school would aim to conquer.

"[...] My opinion, I wouldn't want this to influence my home, in my family, against what I believe, against my belief, against what I believe, right. These are values that I put in my house, in my family, I think everyone defends what they believe, understand? And I as a mother, I wouldn't want, this coming from the government, the

school or any other area of human formation, to interfere on the basis that the family imposes." P8

Understanding gender identity, and how this theme should be addressed in school with students, the lack of knowledge about the didactic material elaborated for such intent, generates confusion in understanding how all this should be transmitted to the student and how the parents will react to this new content in the school curriculum. According to teachers, the information that reaches them so far is only through the media. The National Conference of Bishops of Brazil released a note of disapproval regarding the proposal to insert gender ideology into the pedagogical practice of schools, stating that this approach could have serious implications for the lives of children and families. It ensures that those who defend the term gender would actually have the intention of contriving the family promoting a lifestyle that would incite people to diverse sex life, starting at the child age [10].

According to what most teachers interviewed believe about gender identity at school will jeopardize the traditional family and education model that should be transmitted to children.

"[...] First it has to come from the family this conception, this work of the gender issue with the family right, which I believe that gender, it is biological, there are cases and exceptions. [...] I am in favor of the permanence of the family structure, I think the family is a way of organizing society, the family is a way of being led people to follow a path that is of harmony of peace, right, a path of prosperity. And I don't see that this way you're choosing various kinds of sexual options today that's going to bring you, I believe it's a tricky path. That's my opinion." P10

In this sense, the traditional family model that has always been represented throughout history, by the role of man, woman, and children, currently has varied configurations. There was a certain discomfort and concern in the statements of some teachers, about discussing the theme of gender identity with students, because they believe that going to discuss gender identity, can jeopardize the traditional family model, thus promoting reconstruction in a traditional family organization.

Religion as a Symbol of Social Regulation: Much of what is presented in the interviewees' discourse refers to the limitation that these professionals feel when faced with situations in which it is necessary to discuss gender identity in the school context. When the school comes across families who present beliefs and values based on religion, who consider as in the reformulation of conceptions of life that the individual duo learned in relation to the social representations linked to biological sex, to which it was born, are configured as limiting situations.

In view of these occurrences, religion can make it difficult to promote the debate and discuss with the student, since the family does not accept. As is perceived in the lines:

"[...] And many of the time they are evangelicals, how do you arrive at a father who has been indoctrinated, that his leader hit him in the head that this is as in as if you will approach this subject to this father, as if you will take this theme to him, and the school is not prepared." P2

Religiosity in interviews presents itself as a difficulty in discussing the theme in the educational environment, not only

by the students' families. The justifications of these statements indicate that the individual should be respected and encouraged not to be detached from their beliefs, according to this understanding, removing them would lead to the mischaracterization of people's identity.

"[...] I do not argue if it is an option if it is a disease, we do not discuss any of this, we work the issue of respecting the person, then I do not be interested in participating in a debate on this issue." P5

"[...] Because there mix values, religion, mixes everything." P6

Religion is established as itself the holder of an object that fully satisfies the individual whose seeks it. It creates a principle of a belief that by faith the individual accesses and feels protected. The notion of value is attributed to these beliefs, which makes it considered that the notion of ethics, good customs, good values are attributed only to those who adopt this principle of values within religion. Religion as an instrument of social regulation [11].

"[...] Although we have received a traditional education, we have some ideas and beliefs, even religious, right, cultural right, family members, then enter a very large context, ends up that I take my belief, and I in a way or not, I influence with this belief right. But my perception is like this: educating my daughters in a religious view, with ethical values. [...]" P10

In this sense, much of what is perceived in the interviewees' discourses expresses the conception that discusses gender identity in the religious context, is to access something that should not be questioned. Religious practices interfere with behavior and culture [12].

By mentioning gender and religion, [12] Rocha (2008) addresses gender as a non-institutionalized experience and religion as an institution, to which the author attributes that data on religious linkage make it difficult to exist in a constructive way of designing studies gender and the insertion of this contribution of knowledge into education. It is noteworthy that such results, in the conception of researchers, do not point religion as a negative factor in any context, but rather the need for an a ked work of preconceptions, especially when dealing with diversities in the context of education.

Conclusion

The theme of gender identity, in the current context, has been widely cited, however, it is considered that the subject from the point of view of academic discussion has not yet been able to achieve the understanding of much of society as one thinks about identity of gender as a comprehensive contribution of knowledge to the integral training of people. In the research, it was found that in the perception of the on the theme of gender identity, prevails in most statements, that the theme is still seen as delicate, controversial, new, distant from school and especially seen in a distorted way about what actually advocates the scientific literature on the subject of gender identity. The teacher's report demonstrates some mis information about gender identity and it is assumed that this mis information may be due not only to lack of training on the subject but because of the concept that was imposed on them, even if in a conceptual way is wrong.

Thus, in this distorted form, they confuse gender identity with sexual orientation: in this sense, they understand that change would be for the person to seek sexual affective relationships with same-sex partners. From the analysis of the interviews, 5 thematic axes emerged that establish a relationship of meanings between them, thus gender identity, family relationship, school, religion, teacher training, and *bullying* and violence, are expressive themes of the conceptions of the interviewees on the subject studied. When the teacher for lack of specific training, he begins to have this kind of vision to minimize a situation that can be serious and revealing of *bullying*, he becomes condescending with prejudiced attitudes among the students themselves in school, allowing in a way that this continues, because something is only uprooted if it is faced, debated, and not treated as a simple joke. The lack of specific training on gender theme arises as a cause for concern among teachers, especially in the glimpse of having to work in a school in relation to the subject, bringing the questioning about the posture to be adopted in the face of the problem has not acquired any kind of knowledge about the theme.

The study investigated that working gender in school is a challenge because according to teachers, some families do not accept that teachers guide their students not even on subjects such as hygiene habits, these approaches of teachers by is misunderstood, in this way the school is accused of working sexuality with children. The data indicate that religion presents itself as a difficulty in working gender in the classroom because families and not only families believe that treating gender identity is configured as a sin, and this conception contrasts the religious teachings, beliefs and morality of the family. The research brought as relevance, the need for education professionals to deepen knowledge about gender theme, through training courses, see king knowledge to be prepared to deal with possible situations involving gender in the school context, seeking to avoid situations of prejudice and suffering in this way. Finally, it is suggested that new research be carried out, that this theme is further discussed and studied in training and updating courses for teachers, with the purpose of promoting abroad understanding of the subject in the entire school community and families, with the purpose of minimizing situations of discrimination and suffering.

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