

"O dia de sonhar": reflexões sobre sonhos e valores morais de jovens estudantes

Eduardo Silva BENETTI¹

Rita Melissa LEPRE²

Gabriel Gustavo dos SANTOS³

Resumo

O presente estudo buscou compreender as visões de mundo de jovens frente ao papel da educação em suas vidas, suas aspirações e como pretendiam conquistá-las e analisar as concepções éticas e morais e os valores morais expressos nos sonhos relatados. Um questionário foi aplicado em 21 jovens, entre 11 e 15 anos de idade, participantes do evento “O Dia de Sonhar”, ocorrido no ano de 2019 numa cidade do interior paulista. A metodologia adotada foi a pesquisa de campo, de caráter descritivo qualitativo/quantitativo e o uso de questionário aberto para a coleta dos dados. As respostas destacaram valores morais como justiça e direitos humanos, porém, com foco na meritocracia, apontando para a necessidade de se trabalhar questões éticas e morais que contribuam para a efetivação dos projetos de vida desses jovens. Os resultados permitiram concluir que a maioria vê na educação uma forma de concretizar seus sonhos.

Palavras-chave: Educação. Ética. Jovens. Moral.

¹ Physical Education Professional, Pedagogue, Master's in Teaching for Basic Education. UNESP- Bauru. ORCID. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1861-6340> E-mail: luxgor00@gmail.com

² Psychologist, Specialist in Neuropsychology, Master's and Doctorate in Education from Universidade Estadual Paulista, Marília Campus. Livre-Docente in Educational Psychology. Associate Professor at Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP). ORCID. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0096-3136> E-mail: melissa.lepre@unesp.br

³ Graduated in Portuguese/Spanish Languages from Universidade Estadual do Norte do Paraná (UENP). Master's student in Sociology at Universidade Estadual de Londrina (UEL). ORCID. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2091-2712>. E-mail: gabriel.gustavo50@uel.br

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students

Eduardo Silva *BENETTI*

Rita Melissa *LEPRE*

Gabriel Gustavo dos *SANTOS*

Abstract

This study sought to understand the worldviews of young people regarding the role of education in their lives, their aspirations and how they intended to achieve them, and to analyze the ethical and moral conceptions and moral values expressed in the reported dreams. A questionnaire was applied to 21 young people, between 11 and 15 years old, participants of the event “O Dia de Sonhar”, which took place in 2019 in a city of São Paulo state. The methodology adopted was field research, with a qualitative/quantitative descriptive character and the use of an open questionnaire for data collection. The responses highlighted moral values such as justice and human rights, however, with a focus on meritocracy, which indicates the need to work on ethical and moral issues that contribute to the realization of the life projects of these young people. The results allowed us to conclude that the majority see education as a way to realize their dreams.

Keywords: Education. Ethics. Young. Morals.

El día de los sueños: reflexiones sobre los valores morales de los jóvenes del interior de São Paulo

Eduardo Silva BENETTI

Rita Melissa LEPRE

Gabriel Gustavo dos SANTOS

Resumen

Este artículo es el resultado del análisis de un cuestionario aplicado a 21 jóvenes, entre 11 y 15 años, participantes del evento “O Dia de Sonhar”, que ocurrió en 2019 en una ciudad del interior de São Paulo. Con esto, tratamos de comprender las cosmovisiones de estos jóvenes sobre el papel de la educación en sus vidas, sus aspiraciones y cómo pretendían alcanzarlas. Adoptamos como metodología la investigación de campo, con carácter descriptivo cualitativo/cuantitativo y el uso de cuestionarios abiertos para la recolección de datos. El objetivo central de este estudio es analizar las concepciones éticas y morales y los valores morales expresados en las respuestas. Como resultado, concluimos que la mayoría ve en la educación una forma de hacer realidad sus sueños. Algunas respuestas destacan valores morales como la justicia, los derechos humanos, basados en la meritocracia y apuntan a la necesidad de trabajar cuestiones éticas y morales que contribuyan a la realización de los proyectos de vida de estos jóvenes.

Palabras clave: Educación. Ética. Juventud. Moral.

Introduction

The event "The Day for dreaming" originated from a partnership between the municipal education department in a medium-sized city in São Paulo's interior, civil society, and the Votorantim Institute, represented by Citrosuco. The goal was to listen to the aspirations and enhance the agency of the young students in the municipal education network. This institute promotes public-private partnerships in various cities to encourage youth leadership. To participate, the interested school first contacts its students. After gathering their interests, the coordinators from the institute and the school provide initial clarifications. Following this initial contact, the school and its students form a group of representatives, mostly consisting of students from the unit and the pedagogical coordinator. Meetings then begin, occurring monthly or more frequently if needed, with an average duration of one and a half hours. The frequency was based on the urgency and/or need to clarify certain questions, especially regarding the organization of the event. During these meetings, the young people expressed their concerns, fears, desires, and ideas, which were all noted for later discussion. Group dynamics were also conducted to facilitate interaction between the young participants and the institute's representatives.

These meetings, involving the organizers and the young participants, were held to determine which actions would be developed and to set a possible date for the event. The adolescents participated voluntarily and actively in the planning meetings, engaging in dialogues and ensuring that the event's objectives were aligned with their needs.

We understand that for the school to effectively contribute to the development of life projects, it is important to create spaces for dialogue with the young people, respecting their autonomy and ensuring their right to active participation in decision-making on matters of their interest. This approach can also lead to taking on responsibilities.

The right to participation for children and adolescents is enshrined within the Global Human Rights Protection System, specifically in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its emergence is linked to the strengthening of human rights protections for children and adolescents, based on the understanding that they are in conditions of vulnerability and discrimination, making the adoption of protective measures for their rights imperative (AÇÃO EDUCATIVA, 2015).

"The Day for dreaming" took place on October 19, 2019, from 9:00 AM to noon. The event was open to the entire community with no mandatory participation, and it had an average attendance of 50 people. Among the adults present were those involved in the organization, including teachers,

coordinators, representatives from the social sector of the partner company, civil society representatives, and officials from the municipal education and culture departments. The young attendees included students from the municipal education network, aged 11 to 15 years, covering both Elementary School I and II, and coming from the city's peripheral areas. The event also featured the presence of some parents and guardians of the students. Among the students, there were those who were involved in organizing the event. "Daydreaming" included various activities and presentations, such as a play depicting how bullying occurs in schools and its consequences, such as depression and even suicide, along with other artistic performances on different themes. This allowed the young participants complete creative freedom on the topics, highlighting their leadership. Topics like bullying and suicide were addressed, reflecting some of the concerns of these adolescents. The theater and dance performances were chosen by the students themselves. Another notable aspect was that the students actively participated in the organization and promotion of the event. There was also a discussion circle with a psychologist involved in the event's organization to create a safe and open space for dialogue. Additionally, there were theater performances by a local group and poetry readings by poets from the city.

As the goal was to enhance the leadership of these young people in creating a better world according to their perspectives, the authors of this work developed a questionnaire with six open-ended questions aimed at evaluating their understanding of school, the world around them, and their role in society.

The purpose of this article is to present the results of the questionnaire answered by the participants, seeking to analyze their ethical and moral conceptions of life and the moral values expressed in their responses. We briefly discuss some definitions related to ethics and morality. Next, we provide a brief context about the content of the questionnaire and, finally, present the obtained responses, discussing them in light of the theoretical framework adopted. For this, we use authors such as Tugendhat (1996), La Taille (2006), Durkheim (2015), Paulo Freire (2019), Piaget (1932/1994), among others.

Ethics and Morals: some definitions

According to Santos (2021), ethics and morality are concepts often used as synonyms. However, we will base our discussion on the understanding that while ethics and morality are complementary, they possess distinct characteristics.

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students

We understand ethics as a branch of philosophy that studies conceptions of life in society and also guides the principles and conduct that each individual adopts towards others and themselves. It is a way of judging right and wrong, good and evil, and involves continuous learning and refinement of consciousness. Thus, a person is not born ethical but learns to be ethical throughout their life.

Ethics derives from the Greek term *ethos*, which, according to Pedro (2014) and Santos (2021), has two meanings: *êthos*, referring to the place where animals were kept and the dwelling of individuals; and *éthos*, meaning customs or way of being. In this regard, Boff (2003, p. 39) explains that "*Ethos* is synonymous with ethics... the ordered set of principles, values, and ultimate motivations of human, personal, and social practices. Ethos also means the character or way of being of a person or community."

Tugendhat (1996) afirma que a ética é uma reflexão sobre valores morais de forma crítica. La Taille (2006) aprofunda o conceito de ética quando aborda a questão da procura pela "vida boa" e a forma como isso incide na expansão de si, como ser que busca um sentido para viver. Ele afirma:

(...) we can henceforth only refer to it and say that a necessary condition for experiencing happiness, the "good life," is to see oneself as a person of value, capable of asserting oneself as such, and to perceive prospects for achieving a satisfactory level in the tendency to elevate oneself and develop (LA TAILLE, 2006, p. 48).

Moral, on the other hand, derives from the Latin word *mos*, which means norms, laws, or customs. As a result, some scholars use moral and ethics interchangeably. According to Piaget (1932, 1994), morality is related to the rules and norms of society that prescribe what is acceptable or not. Unlike ethics, which can be seen as timeless—meaning it exists outside the flow of time, even though it is historical and not natural—morality is bound to the time and context in which a particular society or group of people lives. For example, we can cite the historical practice of slavery, which was once accepted but is now regarded as an abomination, with very rare and criminal exceptions.

Durkheim (2015) understands morality as a set of judgments that individuals, either alone or collectively, make about their own actions and those of others in order to assign value. Morality is related to the rules of conduct within a given society for harmonious coexistence, and it is necessary to actively adapt to this reality. Thus, a moral judgment is,

a judgment that a certain type of action is good or bad, and in this sense, that something should be permitted or prohibited, cannot be empirically justified [...] The only thing we can empirically justify is a judgment that states that individuals from this or that cultural circle or social class consider (or have considered) a certain type of action as bad or reprehensible (TUGENDHAT, 1996, p. 14-15).

Pedro (2014) argues that morality is fundamentally about practice; each action is based on a norm, and failure to comply with it can lead to sanctions. This view aligns with Durkheim (2015), who asserts that every moral conduct is associated with a repressive sanction or coercion to ensure that actions align with socially established rules. Similarly, La Taille (2006) refers to all systems of rules and norms that define how one should act as morality. According to the author, every moral system implies a sense of obligation, and failure to follow these rules results in sanctions.

Thus, we understand that ethics encompasses everything that precedes morality, defining the manner of acting in relation to an established norm. In other words, one depends on the other to establish moral and ethical conduct within a community, creating a dialectical relationship.

It is also important to understand how values and moral virtues are related to the assumption of morality throughout life. However, it is necessary to first understand what constitutes virtue or value. Tognetta (2003) clarifies that value or virtue is any human quality directed towards doing good, motivated by moral practice.

Reason alone cannot be considered the sole motivation for moral action, as affectivity is also a driving force for virtuous action; it involves being willing to act for something greater. Tognetta (2003) emphasizes that while just actions are commonly expected, a generous action goes beyond the norm, aiming to act in a just manner.

Given this, we seek to reflect on the role of youth agency in building a better world, with ethics and morality as the foundation. Regarding the importance of understanding the youth's universe, the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) presents the following exposition:

Adopting this expanded and plural notion of youth means understanding youth cultures in their uniqueness. It involves not only recognizing them as diverse and dynamic but also acknowledging young people as active participants in the societies to which they belong, societies that are also dynamic and diverse (BRASIL, 2018, p.463).

Therefore, understanding these young people's worldview allows for a better grasp of their potential roles in various areas of society, not just in education. Based on this principle and guided by the perspective of advocating for the active role of youth in society, we aim to foster discussions about youth agency in decision-making within their life projects and reflect on the intrinsic moral values that guide their decisions, thoughts, and actions.

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students

Metodological Procedure

The Day for Dreaming was an event initiated by the students of the school where the research was conducted, motivated by the mediating team, which consisted of a representative from the Municipal Secretary of Education (SME), a member of the Votorantim Institute, members of civil society, and students from the final years of schooling. The SME representative was responsible for the reproduction and dissemination of proposals to other network managers, as well as the Institute member, who also assisted in mediating with the youth.

These young people, in turn, communicated what was being worked on to the school community, reaching a consensus within the working group to decide on the name of the event. After this decision, the group of students organized the presentations that the students would display, which included a play about "Suicide" representing a consequence of bullying in school and a dance addressing depression among young people. They also helped with the organization of the school and the entire event schedule.

Additional activities included a poetry reading with a local poetry group, a musical performance by a local group, a painting workshop, a robotics workshop, and the event concluded with final remarks from the organizers. The partnership between SME and PVE served only the final years of elementary education; however, the event was advertised to all years, both initial and final. The school currently serves both the Initial and Final Years of Elementary Education, with an average of 800 students⁴.

We used discourse textual analysis as our methodology, employing a questionnaire composed of six open-ended questions addressing opinions on topics such as education, politics, and society. These questions were suggested by the students themselves in preparation for the event "The Day of Dreaming." Our aim was to understand their views on ethics and morality in relation to the world, as well as the values that underpin these perspectives.

In this way, the questions were designed to capture how adolescents perceive the world (or parts of it), or in other words, how they represent it. The theoretical formulations initiated by social psychologist Serge Moscovici (2003) are crucial for understanding this human process of defining conduct. According to Moscovici, social representation is a social phenomenon through which we, as humans, codify the reality around us. More deeply, it can be understood as a narrative, a form of knowledge elaborated and collectively shared among humans, based on a mixture of elements such as experiences, beliefs, value judgments, myths, prejudices, and common sense discourses

⁴ <https://qedu.org.br/escola/35062649-graciema-ramos-da-silva-professora-emef/censo-escolar>

(MOSCOVICI, 2003). It is in this dialectical process that individuals construct interpretations/representations of different aspects of their lives, which, in turn, influence their adoption of certain behaviors and choices.

In this context, the objective was to understand some moral conceptions or representations through the expression of these young people's values, aiming to comprehend how these might influence the construction of their life projects. With these guiding questions in mind, we constructed the questionnaire targeting adolescents, ensuring that the questions were formulated in accessible language.

The questionnaire, consisting of six questions, was printed in multiple copies and placed on a table strategically positioned near the main entrance of the event venue to be visible to participants. The participation process was quick and natural: adolescents approached the table, picked up a copy of the questionnaire, and answered it using the pens provided. They then placed their completed forms alongside the remaining blank questionnaires.

It is important to note that at the beginning of the event, information about the existence of the questionnaires and their relevance was provided. The location of the questionnaires and the instructions for filling them out were also clarified, with an emphasis that participation was optional. As a result, we obtained responses from 21 adolescents, aged between 11 and 15 years.

Participants Table

Participants/Age	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years
Male	x	x	2	1	1
Female	x	4	5	6	5

Source - From the authors (2022)

Although the questionnaire was not administered in a controlled environment, it still provided moments of reflection that could be positive in decision-making, especially regarding the life project they will choose, as suggested by the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC, 2018), which addresses the need to develop youth protagonism.

It is important to emphasize that the idea for this work arose spontaneously during a conversation among researchers about the upcoming event. Therefore, according to OFÍCIO CIRCULAR Nº 17/2022/CONEP/SECNS/MS dated July 5, 2022, we have the following opinion:

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students
The purpose of this Circular Office is to guide researchers and members of the CEP/Conep System (Research Ethics Committees/National Commission on Research Ethics) regarding projects that use methodologies characteristic of the Humanities and Social Sciences and are exempt from submission to the CEP/Conep System. It is, therefore, a document to explain the sole paragraph of Article 1 of CNS Resolution No. 510, dated April 7, 2016, and its subsections. The exemption from submission to the CEP/Conep System exclusively refers to research protocols whose procedures fall entirely within one or more of the subsections of the aforementioned article.

[...]Sole Paragraph. They will not be registered or evaluated by the CEP/Conep System:

I – public opinion research with unidentified participants;

VII – research aimed at theoretical deepening of situations that emerge spontaneously and contingently in professional practice, provided that it does not reveal data that could identify the subject (BRASIL, 2022).

Therefore, in accordance with the aforementioned resolution, efforts were made to respect ethical principles, such as maintaining confidentiality regarding the participants' identities; taking care in the production and application of questions, ensuring respect for human dignity and their respective age groups; and being transparent with them about the work being conducted, explaining that non-participation would not incur any consequences for them, and that the collected data would be used solely for scientific purposes.

The participation of the young people was voluntary, allowing them to approach the table where the questionnaires were placed and respond at any time. As mentioned, out of the 50 participants, 21 young individuals answered the following questions:

- 1) What is your biggest dream and how do you plan to achieve it?
- 2) How can the school help you achieve your dream?
- 3) What do you want to be/do when you grow up? How will you get there?
- 4) What do you like most about your neighborhood/city/world? And what do you dislike?
- 5) What would you change/improve in your neighborhood/city/world?
- 6) If you could make a request to the politicians of Brazil, what would you ask for?

Regarding the data analysis method, we used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, aiming to highlight similarities among the responses through keywords and themes identified. In this case, we grouped the responses based on these aspects and within each group, we highlighted the most illustrative excerpts, with the aim of establishing connections between the content of the responses and the questions raised by the selected theoretical framework.

The target audience consists of young adolescents, both female and male, students from the final years of elementary school, all residents of the city's periphery, close to the school. Based on the

researchers' experiences and prior knowledge, which are related to the local context and city in focus, it can be inferred, generally speaking, and without further details on the socioeconomic situation, that most of the young participants experience daily the social inequality present in their context. Considering the neighborhood where they live, characterized by violence, minimal infrastructure, and a lack of social/educational projects aimed at youth, it is deduced that these young people have limited opportunities to access cultures beyond those that are part of their daily lives. The *Dia de Sonhar* (Dream Day) event serves as a way to broaden their horizons regarding cultural/educational possibilities beyond the school and neighborhood walls.

Analysis and Reflections Based on the Questionnaire Responses

1. What is your biggest dream and how do you plan to achieve it?

Regarding this question, 38.09% (8) of the participants answered that their biggest dream is to travel internationally and that this goal could only be achieved through work, indicating a value placed on having a profession to attain such objectives. This suggests that their values may align with the concept of achieving goals through their own abilities, without shortcuts or “easier” ways.

We can infer this from some excerpts collected: “Go to Mexico. By working”; “Become a dancer, through opportunities and determination.” These responses support the hypothesis that these young people may view personal effort as the path to achieving their dreams, prompting reflections on the meritocratic idea of willpower and individual effort that many of them may have internalized. We are not suggesting that these aspects are not important for achieving life goals; they are indeed fundamental. However, our critique lies in the neglect of the social forces that condition opportunities and actions, which also influence outcomes. Thus, by not considering that each individual starts from different points in the same society, there is a risk of developing a naive reasoning that everyone has the same chance of success. It is important to clarify that we cannot definitively say whether the participants are unaware, even if only to a limited extent, of this issue, but it is notable that their responses lack critical elements that could challenge the idea of meritocracy. This absence is quite indicative and problematic regarding how personal success is perceived socially.

Jessé Souza (2017), influenced by the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, highlights this issue when discussing social inequalities reproduced through family socialization. A middle-class family, besides having the economic capital to afford their heirs the time to study, encourages them through family socialization to engage in reading, prospective thinking, discipline, and concentration—all elements necessary for academic success and, subsequently, professional success.

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students

In contrast, many individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds must work from an early age to contribute to the household income, leaving little time for education. Moreover, they are subjected to a type of socialization where immediate thinking is more valued due to the various daily problems they face. It is evident that a person's success is not limited to these aspects alone, but they, along with others, decisively influence the final outcome, whether positive or negative (SOUZA, 2017).

Additionally, 33.33% (7) of the participants expressed a dream of completing higher education, and all these young people agreed that the path to achieving this goal is through dedication to their studies. Their responses show how studying is considered essential for a better future, with the realization of this dream linked to values that emphasize individual effort and dedication. However, this dedication refers to an obligation to achieve something, whether due to pressure from recognized authorities, their own social position, or personal determination. The motivations behind this dedication are not explicitly clear, but we can reflect, based on Tungendhat (1996), that duty involves actions taken in response to certain rules, whether imposed by family, society, or otherwise. While the representation of dedication is commendable, a controlled investigation is necessary to understand the real reasons behind this motivation.

In the following excerpts, we again see the connection between context and effort, this time translated into achieving higher education and understanding achievement through education: "My dream from an early age is to become a psychologist, and I plan to achieve it by studying a lot," "To find a cure for tetraplegia and become a great general surgeon. Studying a lot."

Furthermore, we observed that 14.28% (3) of the participants stated that they aspire to success but did not detail what this desired success entails, as highlighted in the following excerpts: "My dream is to be in IT and be successful," "To graduate in medicine and be successful." It is worth noting again that studies are mentioned as a decisive factor between success and failure, revealing that the young people understand that education facilitates the realization of their dreams. However, their responses do not show a critical stance on whether success is related to personal fulfillment or to market interests promoted by capitalist society.

Finally, 14.28% (3) of the participants identified their dream as becoming police officers, indicating a possible indignation towards the social injustices occurring in their contexts of origin and in Brazil itself: "My dream is to be a police officer; I plan to achieve it a bit later," "My greatest dream is to join the police to help with justice."

La Taille (2006) encourages reflection on this issue by asserting that indignation represents a moral awareness regarding actions deemed immoral, whether they affect oneself or others. La Taille

BENETTI; LEPRE; SANTOS (2006, p. 62) further reflects on justice: "Finally, let us note that justice is both a moral and political theme: we talk about just people, but also about just institutions and just legal laws." Although the analysis suggests a possible emergence of this indignation, it is still relative to presume that it indicates a moral domain, as it does not specify the conception of justice intended. However, according to Comte-Sponville, "[...] justice is undoubtedly the only one that is absolutely good. [...] Justice is not a virtue like the others. It is the horizon of all and the law of its coexistence" (2009, p.33). According to the same author, justice is a complete virtue (COMTE-SPONVILLE, 2009)

We can see that there are various motivations and dreams, with the majority of responses emphasizing individual effort to achieve them. Let's understand what this motivation is about. According to Biaggio (1985), motivation refers to the drive to succeed, achieve, or perform well, which is considered an interesting personality trait for those concerned with development.

In light of this, most of the young participants are concerned with their educational development to achieve some of their dreams and are motivated to do so. In this sense, we need to question: how does the school relate to this? How do these young people perceive the educational institution? With this in mind, we are led to the second question.

2. How can the school help you achieve your dream?

Regarding the second question, 61.90% (13) of the participants responded that the school can help them achieve their dreams by performing its teaching role, as seen in the following excerpts: "By teaching," "With study and everything it offers," "By providing the necessary education".

However, there is no clear definition of what function this is or whether it only refers to the fact that the school transmits content, which could imply the idea of banking education (FREIRE, 2019), where the school is merely an inert place where fragmented and disconnected content is deposited into the student as if they were a blank slate. In this sense, such a view would be quite limited, as it would reduce education to the act of internalizing knowledge in an uncritical manner, without contestation or dialogue with the students' experiences.

19.04% said that the school could contribute by offering preparatory courses and/or diverse classes, serving as a type of reinforcement or extracurricular activity to deepen the content presented during the academic period, as we can see from the following excerpts: "Having more and more lectures, more information on the subjects," "Encouraging students and having courses as well." The responses provide little detail on how this proposal would help and/or improve the school curriculum.

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students
However, the observations highlighted show that adolescents feel the school could be more active in the construction of knowledge. According to Freire (2020), the school has not fulfilled its role effectively, which can be seen, for example, in the difficulty young people have in expressing themselves through writing.

9.52% of the participants, on the other hand, responded that learning foreign languages could contribute to achieving their dreams, but still vaguely, without addressing how learning a foreign language would help realize their dreams. It should be noted that the city's municipal network includes foreign language classes in its curriculum. This brings us to reflect again on banking education, as referred to by Freire (2019) and previously mentioned. We can also consider the dependency theory brought by Biaggio (1985), where the child is conditioned to behaviors in which they are always dependent on others, in this case, the school, receiving content passively.

Finally, 9.52% (2) of the participants did not know how the school could help or do not believe that the school can play a fundamental role in achieving their dreams. We illustrate with the following excerpts: "I'm not sure," "There is no possibility of helping," "It cannot." This demonstrates that there are still young people who do not see change through education or do not see it as a means to achieve their goals. La Taille (2006, p.11) poses the following question: "I think it was Edgar Morin who said that the mistake of education (at all levels) is to teach the answers that philosophy and science have given, without making clear to students what the questions that motivated them were," meaning there is no motivation for students to understand the importance of education, making it something devoid of meaning.

In this regard, Charlot (2000) advocates for the existence of figures of learning, which is the way we relate to the act of learning. Many people find more meaning, for example, in learning to master a skill, such as using a computer or repairing a car, than in learning a specific school subject. The way we relate to learning varies according to our social context, our worldview, and what we desire for ourselves. Thus, for some, learning other things beyond school knowledge may align more with their life goals.

3. What do you want to be/do when you grow up? How will you get there?

In question three, 71.42% (15) of the participants stated that they wish to graduate from a higher education course, thereby corroborating the majority of the responses to the first question, which emphasized that the path to achieving their dreams is through studying. This is illustrated by the following excerpts: "Veterinarian, by putting in effort and studying," "I want to be a lawyer, and I

BENETTI; LEPRE; SANTOS

can get there by studying a lot.” Although these young people seem to understand that education is one of the necessary tools for social advancement, it is likely that this understanding is still based on the perspective of individual effort and meritocracy.

One participant (4.76%) indicated that they wish to be honest, responding from an ethical and moral perspective. Honesty is a moral value that has been increasingly emphasized in the current Brazilian context. This is in response to societal discomfort with the constant corruption scandals involving public money, politicians, and ordinary individuals, which further complicate the lives of the most disadvantaged who rely on public services for their subsistence. According to Boff (2003), an ethical revolution is necessary to address the neglect of human beings, awakening a deep sense of solidarity that rejects inhumane behaviors, including dishonesty. “I intend to be what many are not, honest.” In this excerpt, we can observe the participant’s perception of honesty as an important moral value that is not commonly found. In this sense, we believe that honesty is a topic that can and should be addressed by schools.

The school as a space for composing and reflecting on important experiences for an individual's social life contributes significantly to their formation, in all aspects of human development, aiming to prepare them for building their citizenship (LEPRE; FERREIRA, 2020, p. 1565).

9.52% (2) of the participants expressed a desire to become police officers and related this ambition to “doing justice.” This raises questions about the underlying motivations and perceptions of their future roles. One participant, unlike the others, could not articulate how they would achieve this goal, reflecting a potential passivity regarding their own life project, where they should be the protagonists.

The desire to join the police evokes several questions. The role of a police officer is highly ambiguous in society: while some view it as a role dedicated to justice, others see it as a tool of state repression and authority. Living in peripheral neighborhoods with significant police presence might influence these aspirations, though it’s unclear whether these individuals wish to become enforcers or contribute positively to society. The nature of their responses makes it challenging to discern whether their motivation is driven by a desire for justice or coercion, but it clearly warrants further attention.

Também um (4,76%) dos participantes apontou que ter uma vida boa é sua ambição quando for adulto, conforme podemos observar no excerto: “Eu quero ter uma vida boa, lutando”, mas não argumentou o que seria essa vida boa e nem como fazer para conquistá-la de forma mais coesa, ou seja, fica em aberto se seria ter dinheiro, bens materiais ou viver plenamente feliz. Nos parece ser

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students importante em um outro momento, delimitar as perguntas de forma mais objetiva, favorecendo o conhecimento acerca do tema de forma mais ampla. Podemos perceber que os jovens acreditam que o estudo é o melhor caminho para conquistarem seus sonhos, no entanto, apontam um distanciamento entre a importância da educação escolar apontada por eles e como realmente é vivenciada, talvez isso seja um norte para entendermos e repensarmos a escola como um todo, tentando aproximar os jovens e obter maior participação, fazendo a educação mais próxima possível de seus objetivos pessoais. Para tanto, pesquisas planejadas e aprofundadas se fazem necessárias.

4. What do you like most about your neighborhood/city/world? And what do you dislike?

Aqui está um resumo das análises e reflexões sobre as respostas dos participantes em relação ao que eles gostam e não gostam:

The analysis of responses to the question about personal likes and dislikes reveals that the subjective nature of these preferences is crucial for reflection. Among the dislikes, participants mentioned prejudice, drugs, crime, and violence, with drugs being a recurring theme: "I don't like drug dealing and the drugs," "I don't like the drug dealing in my neighborhood." This is significant, given that participants live in peripheral neighborhoods where such issues are common.

On the other hand, what they appreciate includes friendship, culture (in a broad sense), community projects, open events, nature, and tranquility. The fears and desires stemming from their social situations, especially living in marginalized neighborhoods, likely influence these priorities.

The school's role in connecting with these young individuals is critical. Given that friendship is a recurring theme, schools can play a vital role in providing support and introducing new ethical values and moral conduct, steering them away from the allure of crime and drugs. This connection involves effective communication, empathetic listening, and ensuring that students' voices are heard and respected. By engaging with them as protagonists in their educational journey, schools can foster positive changes and support their development.

5. What would you change/improve in your neighborhood/city/world?

In the fifth question, 66.66% (14) of the participants indicated that they would change people, even though there was no description of what such a change would entail. From the context expressed in the previous answers, it seems that this change is related to transforming attitudes. In this regard, one participant stated: "I would change and separate those who do good from those who do evil," possibly referring to people they know.

Regarding this dichotomous view of good and evil, it is necessary to expand the understanding that people can have good or bad attitudes based on certain nuances that shape social relations. These should be considered and reflected upon if we aim to develop critical subjects. In this sense, the school plays an important role, and engaging young people in participation and the development of critical consciousness is a potential path.

Another 33.33% (7) said they would change social inequality, demonstrating discomfort with this situation and the need for public policies aimed at minimizing such differences. Many of the young participants come from peripheral neighborhoods in the city, marked by intense social inequalities, often facing situations of extreme disrespect for human dignity.

The reality experienced by these young people may create uncertainties about the future, but their responses reveal a desire for change and an awareness that it is possible to dream and strive to achieve these dreams despite the disparities. Thus, according to Piaget (1932, 1998) and Vinha (2000), schools can assist these youths in building moral values that promote the possibilities for change and the creation of a better, fairer, and more equitable world for everyone, as it is a space for social relations.

6. If you could make a request to the politicians of Brazil, what would you ask for?

This was also a question that elicited a variety of responses. In total, 14.28% (3) of the participants did not answer and/or were unsure how to respond or had difficulty understanding the context of the question. This figure indicates possible misunderstandings of the question and/or the broad range of possible inquiries, but it does not preclude the difficulty in understanding the tumultuous current political scenario.

The political dimension, alongside the technical and human dimensions, is of utmost importance for the development of a critical subject, and the school needs to implement actions that can:

- ensure the protagonism of students in their learning and the development of their abilities in abstraction, reflection, interpretation, proposal, and action, which are essential to their personal, professional, intellectual, and political autonomy;
- value the social roles played by young people beyond their status as students, and enhance the processes of constructing their identity(ies) and life projects;
- promote collaborative learning by developing students' ability to work in teams and learn from their peers;
- and stimulate cooperative and proactive attitudes to tackle the challenges of the community, the job market, and society at large, grounded in knowledge and innovation (BRASIL, 2018, p.465).

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students

Although the above quote is presented as a goal of secondary education, education itself aims to develop critical subjects, and distancing from political relations can fragment the understanding of the surrounding reality. We can observe this proposal in two of the ten general competencies of basic education, specifically competencies six and seven.

6. Value the diversity of knowledge and cultural experiences and acquire knowledge and experiences that enable understanding of the specific relationships in the world of work and make choices aligned with the exercise of citizenship and their life project, with freedom, autonomy, critical awareness, and responsibility.
7. Argue based on facts, data, and reliable information, to formulate, negotiate, and defend ideas, viewpoints, and common decisions that respect and promote human rights, socio-environmental awareness, and responsible consumption at local, regional, and global levels, with an ethical stance regarding the care of oneself, others, and the planet (BRASIL, 2018, p.9).

Another 14.28% (3) would request higher wages for workers, reduction in drug trafficking, and also a decrease in the presence of weapons, while 9.52% (2) of the participants would ask for an increase in the number of authorities combating crime: "to increase workers' salaries," "to end drug trafficking," "to eliminate weapons." These responses indicate a social awareness that values both their own well-being and that of others, as well as dissatisfaction with the lack of effective public policies promoting public safety in Brazil.

Another 33.33% (7) of participants would ask for more justice and less corruption in the political sphere, with many criticizing Brazilian politicians' failure to fulfill promises. This suggests a growing sense of indignation among these young people, which relates to La Taille (2006), who argues that such indignation arises from the acquisition of ethical values and an evolution in moral conduct, which translates into the dissatisfaction observed.

Finally, 28.57% (6) of participants would ask politicians for more opportunities, from education to employment, and also point to the need for investment in the quality of education offered in schools. Thus, it is essential that these young people are heard and, above all, encouraged to actively participate in society, as this will help build a morally just and ethically coherent society where social rights are respected, and everyone can contribute to social progress.

Conclusion

The analyses and reflections presented in this article did not result from a controlled study but from the application of a questionnaire in a specific situation aimed at gathering the perceptions and impressions of young participants on topics that may involve ethical and moral issues. In this sense, our goal is to generate reflections that lead to possible questions which, in turn, could produce research and new knowledge.

The proposal is grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in 1990, particularly Article 12, Paragraph 1, and Article 13, Paragraph 1, which respectively state:

Here is the translation of Article 12, Paragraph 1:

Article 12-1: The States Parties shall ensure that a child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely on all matters affecting the child, with due regard to the views of the child in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 13-1: The child shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, through the arts, or through any other media of the child's choice (BRASIL, 1990).

Thus, it is relevant to collect such conceptions and impressions in order to support and reaffirm the rights of expression granted to children, which are often violated due to a lack of knowledge or the possibility of action.

The responses obtained from the questionnaires highlight the partial perspective of the subjects involved. Although there is a degree of subjectivity and informality, the data remains a powerful material for reflecting on the issues we initially proposed, considering the inherent limitations of such a survey.

Based on the presented data, we observed that the participants recognize that moral values related to human rights, justice, and education are crucial for building a healthy and fair society that ensures equality for all people and respect for human diversity. The very act of voluntarily participating in an event of this nature and responding to the questionnaire may reflect these adolescents' predisposition towards a more critical view of their surrounding reality and a motivation to make a difference.

The same can be observed in some of these young people's ethical conceptions, as their responses criticized injustice, inequality, violence, corruption, and drug trafficking, which are

"The day for dreaming": reflections on dreams and moral values of young students sometimes present, particularly in their social contexts. In this sense, we conclude that it is essential for school curricula to establish a closer dialogue with the realities of the individuals, giving them a voice, in order to contribute to the realization of their dreams, as well as to foster their moral and ethical growth, focusing on universal rights, social and political issues, and the development of autonomy.

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BENETTI; LEPRE; SANTOS

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