

The ethical formation of undergraduate students in pedagogy in times of “gender ideology”: a cross-sectional study using the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)

Formação ética de graduandos/as em Pedagogia em tempos de “ideologia de gênero”: um estudo transversal utilizando o Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)

Formación ética de estudiantes de pregrado en pedagogía en tiempos de “ideología de género”: un estudio transversal utilizando el Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)

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ABSTRACT


In this article, the result of research that focused on the ethical dimension of the pedagogue's work with gender and sexuality issues at school, the objective was to analyze the ethical formation, from the point of view of moral development, of undergraduate students in Pedagogy at a public University in São Paulo. The sample was composed of 165 subjects enrolled in the initial and final years of the course that set the research. To measure their ethical background, Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian approaches to moral development and the Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2) were used. The results showed that the ethical formation of undergraduate students remains stagnant and even indicates a certain regression throughout the course. In addition, the low performance of the participants was strongly related to their religious bond, implying that the bond and the religious formation can delegitimize and curb their ethical formation.


Keywords: Ethics. Moral Development. Pedagogy. Initial Teacher Formation. DIT-2.

RESUMO

Neste artigo, resultado de uma pesquisa que se ateve à dimensão ética do trabalho do/a pedagogo/a com os temas de gênero e sexualidades na escola, objetiva-se analisar a formação ética, do ponto de vista do desenvolvimento moral, de graduandos/as em Pedagogia de uma universidade pública paulista. A amostra foi composta de 165 sujeitos matriculados nos anos inicial e final do curso que ambientou a pesquisa. Para a mensuração de sua formação ética, recorreram-se às abordagens kohlberguiana e neokohlberguiana do desenvolvimento moral e utilizou-se o Defining Issues

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Test 2 (DIT-2). Os resultados demonstraram que a formação ética dos/as graduandos/as se mantém estagnada e, até mesmo, indica certa regressão ao longo do curso. Além disso, o baixo desempenho dos/as participantes esteve fortemente relacionado com seu vínculo religioso, inferindo-se que o vínculo e a formação religiosa podem deslegitimar e coibir sua formação ética.

Palavras-chave: Ética. Desenvolvimento Moral. Pedagogia. Formação Inicial Docente. DIT-2.

RESUMEN

En este artículo, resultado de una investigación que se centró en la dimensión ética del trabajo del pedagogo con las cuestiones de género y sexualidad en la escuela, el objetivo es analizar la formación ética, en punto de vista del desarrollo moral, de estudiantes de Pedagogía de una Universidad pública de São Paulo. La muestra estuvo formada por 165 sujetos matriculados en los años inicial y final del curso que marcó la investigación. Para medir su trasfondo ético, se utilizaron enfoques kohlberguianos y neo-kohlberguianos del desarrollo moral y se utilizó lo Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2). Los resultados mostraron que la formación ética de los estudiantes de pregrado se mantiene estancada e incluso indica un cierto retroceso a lo largo del curso. Además, el bajo desempeño de los participantes estuvo fuertemente relacionado con su vínculo religioso, lo que implica que el vínculo y la formación religiosa pueden deslegitimar y frenar su formación ética.

Palabras clave: Ética. Desarrollo Moral. Pedagogía. Formación Inicial de Profesores. DIT-2.

INTRODUCTION

An ethical formation has been advocated in the Brazilian educational normative field at least since the country's redemocratization process, with a series of documents and parameters having been promulgated from that period onwards that advise it from Elementary School to Higher Education. Pradel and Dáu (2009) recall that the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988), promulgated in 1988, establishes the construction of a free, just, and fraternal society as one of the fundamental objectives of the Republic, promoting the well-being of all, without prejudice or discrimination. Therefore, from this milestone of the redemocratization process, other documents and parameters constituting the educational normative field mentioned have been promulgated. These, in accordance with the Constitution, elect an axiological ideal for the construction of this society and, in its case, foresee this ethical formation as one of the responsibilities of schooling.

From this normative field, the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (Law of Guidelines and Foundations of National Education — LDB) (Brasil, 1996, p. 24), of 1996, stands out as the first document regulating Education in the country, establishing “the improvement of the student as a human being, including an ethical formation and the development of intellectual autonomy and critical thinking” as an objective. Also in the 1990s, the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (National Curriculum Parameters — PCN) (Brasil, 1997, p. 23) are significant to the field, making citizenship the “backbone of school education.” From this, ethics is explicitly inserted into the Brazilian educational system as one of the transversal themes — which are: Ethics, Environment, Sexual Orientation, Cultural Plurality, Health, Work, and Consumption — to be articulated with traditional content (Mathematics, Languages, Sciences, etc.) in the school curriculum.

Other documents supporting an ethical formation in the country stem from its affirmed commitment to international human rights treaties, most of which are issued by the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), such as the World Program for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), promulgated in the early 2000s and comprising three phases: the first 2005–2009, the second 2010–2014, and the third, recently concluded, 2015–2019 (UNESCO, 2015).

As a result, there has been the promulgation, more recently, of the *Plano Nacional de Educação em Direitos Humanos* (National Plan for Human Rights Education — PNEDH), published in 2006 (Brasil, 2007) and updated in 2013 (Brasil, 2013, p. 26), and the *Diretrizes Nacionais para a Educação em Direitos Humanos* (National Guidelines for Human Rights Education — DNEDH), published in 2012 (Brasil, 2012), which have, as one of the Human Rights Education (HRE) objectives, an educational public policy then in force, referring to the “learning of human rights principles, ethics, coexistence, and democratic participation in school and society”.

Considering this normative field that has gradually been constituted in recent decades, an ethical formation, whether as a transversal theme or articulated with human rights, has its development foreseen at all levels of education, from Elementary School to Higher Education, in formal and non-formal modalities. Regarding Higher Education, we are drawn to the case of teaching degrees, particularly Pedagogy. Pedagogy students and those of other teaching degrees should have an ethical formation provided in their initial training. This is so that they can not only start from ethical principles in the exercise of their profession, but also because educators are also formers of future generations and, therefore, are responsible for the ethical formation of their students. In this sense, Caetano and Silva (2009) emphasize that the ethical dimension is fundamental in teacher training, considering teaching as an ethical activity par excellence.

Teachers, even those working in Early Childhood Education, face ethical dilemmas and related issues daily, requiring sufficient reflective capacity for the development of a properly grounded pedagogical work based on principles. Through interviews with undergraduate students and teachers already in practice, Boon (2011) confirms this framework by noting the presence of numerous ethical dilemmas in the teacher’s work environment, which generate stress and personal and professional dissatisfaction. Therefore, in the case of the initial training of Pedagogy professionals, ethics is placed as a fundamental precept (Benedet, 2000), directed toward themselves and whoever they will train in their future work in schools.

Considering that among the dilemmas and themes faced by pedagogues in schools are situations involving gender and sexuality, ethics in the formation of these professionals becomes even more necessary, as they will have to judge and intervene in related situations. Themes such as gender and sexuality culturally oscillate in understanding and their approach in schools is permeated by controversies and resistance, including by teachers. Therefore, their judgments and actions in these situations may be in line with the social and legal responsibility of their profession, as revealed in the normative field mentioned, or they may stem from a normative perspective, merely hedonistic in relation to their personal beliefs and with little reflective capacity involved. The research which led to this article focused on this ethical dimension of the work of the pedagogue with the gender and sexuality themes in schools, as announced by Silva, Brabo, and Morais (2017) in the article “Education in human rights and moral development in teacher formation: the influence of religiosity in times of ‘gender ideology’”, providing the theoretical reflections that prompted the development of this empirical research.

In summary, this study,¹ conducted between 2017 and 2018, aimed to investigate the formation with regard to gender and sexualities of Pedagogy undergraduates and relate it to their

1 The study was entitled “*Educação em direitos humanos, gênero e sexualidades, e desenvolvimento moral na formação docente: conhecimentos, concepções e condutas de graduandos(as) em Pedagogia de uma universidade pública do estado de São Paulo*,” funded by FAPESP under process number 2017/01381-9 and with validity from May 1st 2017 to December 31st 2018.

ethical formation, from the standpoint of moral development, in Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian approaches (Kohlberg, 1992; Rest *et al.*, 1999). It was funded by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). In it, gender and sexuality themes were approached as a Human Rights Education problem, which has, as stated in one of its fundamental documents, the overcoming of social inequalities affirmed in national history as another of its objectives. This is characterized by “[...] ethnic-racial, religious, cultural, generational, territorial, physical-individual, and gender intolerance, as well as intolerance of sexual orientation, nationality, and political options, among others” (Brasil, 2013, p. 21). Accordingly, the work to be developed in schools must address other themes, in addition to the homonymous human rights, which equally allow the defense and protection of human dignity, including gender, sexuality, ethnic-racial relations, disability, and religious freedom, among others. This guarantees that the demands of certain individuals and social groups historically excluded from the status of rights holders are met.

When addressing these themes from the perspective of human rights, the rights of vulnerable individuals and groups who are the protagonists of these themes are consequently addressed. These themes include women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite, queer transgender, intersexual, and asexual people, etc. (LGBTQIA+ individuals), Black people, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and practitioners of religions with lower adherence, etc.

The research has an interdisciplinary nature, linked to the following fields of study and knowledge: 1. Human Rights Education, 2. Gender Studies, and 3. Moral Development Psychology. It also presents original content due to two main factors: the first is the exploration of the thematic-content diversity that Human Rights Education offers (limited to gender and sexualities) and not only the homonymous one. The second, which is of interest here, the investigation of teacher training in a dual aspect, covering both the content (theoretical-conceptual knowledge about the themes) and the reflective capacity that precedes the teacher’s evaluative position (whether there is favorability or opposition to pedagogical work addressing the themes), with the investigation of their ethical formation in Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian approaches.

The consolidation of the field of Psychology of Moral Development from the 1970s onwards occurred mainly based on the theory of moral development elaborated by American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987). For him (Kohlberg, 1992), the development of moral judgment, defined as the ability to issue judgments based on the justification of different points of view, presents itself over the course of three levels and six stages. These are progressively and hierarchically distributed according to the moral quality of the respective reasoning at each level and stage, without regressions, so that the type of reasoning of a higher stage includes that of the lower and surpasses it.

According to Kohlberg (1992), the first moral level, called *pre-conventional*, corresponds to Stages 1 and 2 of moral development. In it, moral value is found in external factors, in the power and influence of those who introduce the rule, through punishments and rewards, or even personal advantages. The second moral level is known as *conventional*, referring to Stages 3 and 4, which expresses conformity with and maintenance of norms and rules through the recognition of the prevailing social order, whether expressed by laws or agreed upon among peer groups. The third and final moral level, *post-conventional*, concerns Stages 5 and 6, where the law, the prevailing discourse, is considered legitimate only when it fulfills its duty to guarantee the fulfillment of the rights of all. Moral judgments break with the socio-legal context, based on the awareness of rights constituted in universalizable ethical principles.

Regarding the differentiation between ethics and morality, Bataglia and Bortolanza (2012, p. 127) clarify that “it is possible to consider that, with different levels of moral development, ethics relates to more evolved levels since it involves reflection on rules and not necessarily compliance

with them”, and, in the case of Kohlberg’s theory, “the post-conventional stages also allow us to think of ethics as overcoming the level of rules for their relativization in the name of principles”.

It should be emphasized that the aforementioned documents and parameters of the normative field, which provide the legal basis for an ethical formation in the Brazilian educational system, do not impose a specific ethics content, while, at the same time, they do not fall into ethical relativism. In fact, according to Araújo and Aquino (2001, p. 11), the ethical formation these documents refer to is based “on parameters that can guide the actions of different cultures regarding what is considered reasonable regarding respect for the fundamental rights of human rights”; therefore, it is based on the proposition of minimum criteria (principles) that, if adopted, can achieve a harmonious, peaceful, and just coexistence in society.

Accordingly, we consider the Kohlbergian theory more appropriate, and in line with the normative field, both to support the ethical formation to be offered by educators and to investigate it, as is the case here. This is because, according to Lind (2000), the Kohlbergian theory does not limit itself to content but defines the mental structure, in this case, the mode of moral reasoning. For example, two individuals may have different opinions on an issue (that is, different contents, e.g., to steal or not to steal), and yet belong to the same level of moral development. Therefore, these individuals may have the same structure, which would be pre-conventional if their reasoning (to steal or not to steal, following the example) was based on a self-centered perspective; conventional if based on a legalistic perspective; or post-conventional if their reasoning was based on principles; this latter mode of reasoning being what the normative field expects from a student in training and from the educator guiding them. It is in this sense that Lind (2000, p. 400) recognizes the potential of Kohlberg’s theory for the study of an ethical formation, as it “[...] opened the possibility of a systematic moral education beyond moral indoctrination on one side and disinterested relativism on the other”. Thus, for the empirical investigation of an ethical formation, with ethics understood here as reflective capacity regarding what is in the realm of duty, that is, morality (La Taille, 2007), the moral development construct was chosen since its most evolved stages are characterized by the reflective capacity to issue judgments based on principles and, therefore, it can be related to ethics.

Since pedagogues will have to judge and intervene in different situations involving gender and sexualities, involving ethical dilemmas they will face throughout their professional practice, those with a more mature moral reasoning “will be unable to impose their own ideologies on situations that intervene in the individuality of others and will be open and receptive to knowledge differing from that which they foster, being capable of interpreting, considering, and coordinating different perspectives”. Conversely, those who are morally delayed “will be restricted to unilateral, individualistic, ‘group-centric’ conceptions, based on their own ideologies and interests, indifferent as to whether they are normative or not” (Silva, Brabo and Morais, 2017, p. 1275). In other words, professionals with little reflective capacity, who use pre-conventional reasoning to base their practice, may oppose pedagogical work addressing the themes simply because it does not align with their personal beliefs. They may also issue judgments and put into action practices that infringe on human rights or even refrain from intervening in situations of discrimination, generating negative effects on the formation and life of those they educate. Likewise, they may be favorable and work on such themes by external imposition, based on conventional reasoning, seeking approval from others, or merely complying with what is legally provided by the normative field, without recognizing the real need for development of this work. This work includes both the ethical formation of students, for the recognition of the dignity of those who are discriminated against and of human diversity, and an intellectual formation, for the apprehension of theoretical-conceptual knowledge about the themes.

Regarding the ethical dimension of teaching work, Lepre *et al.* (2014, p. 115) warn Pedagogy students that “the profession demands particular characteristics and certain behavioral practices

in this dimension, and what is expected of the teacher is that they rely on a strategy, develop some method, and have resources capable of forming ethical subjects". In this sense, as emphasized by Amorim Neto (2008) and Lepre *et al.* (2014), supported by the normative field, it is expected that undergraduates in Pedagogy courses present very high levels of moral development and know how to act properly in ethical dilemmas. This also implicitly appears in the *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para o curso de graduação em Pedagogia* (National Curricular Guidelines for the undergraduate course in Pedagogy) (Brasil, 2006), whether in dilemmas involving the themes of gender and sexuality or not. In other words, these students are expected to be able to issue judgments based on ethical principles and to apply them consistently in their professional practice and in the situations they encounter.

However, a considerable body of research (Mattos, Shimizu and Bervique, 2008; Shimizu *et al.*, 2010; Bataglia and Bortolanza, 2012; Lepre *et al.*, 2014; Luczkiewicz, 2015; Santos and Diniz, 2016; Moraes *et al.*, 2017) has shown that Higher Education courses, including Pedagogy, have not provided this formation and do not address moral development and the reflective capacity, *let alone* provide an ethical formation to students. The research we have developed, presented here, adds to this body of research that has gradually consolidated in recent years by contributing to the current state of the ethical formation as it applies to the Pedagogy course.

Accordingly, in our research, different instruments were used to collect data on the initial formation in Pedagogy. For the investigation of the education in gender and sexualities of the undergraduates chosen to participate in the research, the methods used were focus groups, a qualitative research technique, and a questionnaire, a quantitative instrument, designed however with open questions to address moral dilemmas in the Kohlbergian proposal. Regarding the ethical formation of these subjects, the Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2), a quantitative and validated instrument for measuring moral judgment, was used.

Given the above and in view of the general proposal of the study, for the production of this article, considering the impossibility of producing a discussion that encompassed all the results obtained with all the instruments used, we decided to present those obtained with the DIT-2. Therefore, with the scope of the article delimited, the objective was to analyze the ethical formation, from the perspective of moral development, of undergraduates in Pedagogy from a public university in São Paulo.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 120 undergraduate students enrolled in the first year (initial) and 120 enrolled in the fourth year (final) were invited to participate in the study. These students were enrolled in one day class and two evening classes (each averaging 40 students) for each year of a Pedagogy course at a public university in São Paulo, and were chosen by convenience sampling. A total of 165 subjects ($n = 165$) agreed to participate in the research, which represents 68.75% of the estimated 240 undergraduate students. They responded to the DIT-2 along with the questionnaire, the latter for data collection on gender and sexuality education. This sample configuration assigned a cross-sectional design to the research.

The DIT-2, developed in 1998 by Rest and Narvaez (1998), is based on the so-called neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral development, which was established by Rest *et al.* (1999) based on 25 years of research with a previous version of the instrument, the DIT-1. This approach retains the essence of Kohlberg's main ideas, but presents some elemental differences. The authors (Rest *et al.*, 1999) trace moral development from developmental *schemas* rather than stages: the *Personal Interest* schema, which corresponds to Kohlberg's stages 2 and 3, the *Maintenance of Norms* schema, derived from Kohlberg's stage 4, and the *Post-Conventional* schema, which encompasses stage 5,

divided into sub-stages 5A and 5B, and 6. While in the Kohlbergian approach, moral development occurs abruptly from one stage to another, in the neo-Kohlbergian approach it occurs through gradual changes in the use and preference for more developed moral thoughts. Therefore, it is not about fitting people into a specific stage, but about analyzing the degree to which they use different types of moral reasoning in the various situations they encounter.

The instrument consists of five moral dilemmas addressing social problems. For each of these dilemmas, the respondent must evaluate twelve possible responses to the dilemmas, with a five-point scale of importance for resolution, and then hierarchically evaluate the four alternatives they consider most important for solving the dilemma. In this way, it is possible to obtain a score, called the P Index, which represents the percentage of post-conventional level (stages 5 and 6) used for solving the presented dilemmas. The DIT-2 also allows the response patterns that subjects offer at each stage (2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) to be visualized, as well as, through the N2 Index, the degree to which items concerning the post-conventional schema are prioritized to be discerned, as they tend to reject items with arguments from lower schemas. The instrument measures how much respondents choose to use one type of moral thinking over another in solving the dilemmas presented. The version of the instrument used was adapted by Shimizu, Bataglia, and Lepre (2009).

It should be highlighted that the dilemmas developed during the research and inserted into another instrument used, the open questionnaire, which was applied along with the DIT-2, aimed to investigate the participants’ education on gender and sexualities. Since the purpose of this article is to analyze the ethical formation, which was investigated using the DIT-2, only the results obtained from this instrument, through the five dilemmas that compose it, are addressed here. It is not appropriate to mention the dilemmas about gender and sexuality that were included in the questionnaire. The results obtained from the application of this questionnaire, as well as the correlations between the data collected from it and the data collected from the DIT-2, have either been published (Silva, 2020; Silva, Brabo and Morais, 2021) or are in the publication phase.

The study was formally authorized by the Course Council of the participating institution, and each participant signed a consent form. The research project was submitted to and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of São Paulo State University (UNESP) Marília, receiving authorization under protocol number 70227717.3.0000.5406 (authorization number 2.235.723). For the analysis of the data collected from the DIT-2, the copies completed by the participants had to be sent to the Center for the Study of Ethical Development, affiliated with the University of Alabama, in the United States, currently responsible for the copyright of the instrument, for the extraction of scores; only then were they analyzed based on the DIT-2 manual (Rest and Narvaez, 1998). Concerning the characterization of the profile of the respondent subjects, the sample variables were counted from a spreadsheet generated by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences — SPSS® software (2021), as shown in the following table of the main variables considered.

In the characterization of the sample (n = 165) it was identified that it was predominantly composed of female participants (n = 156; 94.5%). This is expected for a Pedagogy course, which has historically been established as a predominantly female space, as highlighted by Brabo (2005) regarding the feminization of teaching. Participants enrolled in the evening period were also the majority (n = 105; 63.6%), as there was only one morning class and two evening classes; as well as participants enrolled in the first year of the course (n = 92; 55.7%). The majority of the sample reported adherence to a religion, mostly Christianity (n = 113; 85.6%), with all branches of this religion mentioned separately by the participants in Table 1. A smaller number mentioned Agnosticism (n = 7; 5.3%) and Atheism (n = 11; 8.3%). Finally, the majority self-identified as white (n = 73; 54.9%) and mixed-race (n = 46; 34.6%).

Table 1 – Characterization of the participant sample.

| | No. of participants |
|--|--|
| Year of enrollment | 92 (55.7 %) freshmen 73 (44.3%) graduates |
| Gender | 156 (94.5%) female 9 (5.5%) male |
| Period | 60 (36.4%) day 05 (63.6%) evening |
| Is supervised or conducts research on gender | 3 (1.8%) yes 162 (98.2%) no |
| Religion | 17 (12.9%) Christian 58 (43.9%) Catholic 31 (23.5%) Evangelical 6 (4.5%) Spiritist 1 (0.8%) Mormon 1 (0.8%) Umbanda 7 (5.3%) Agnostic 11 (8.3%) Atheist |
| Race/ethnicity | 4 (3.0%) Asian 73 (54.9%) White 46 (34.6%) Mixed-race 10 (7.5%) Black |
| Total | 165 (100%) |

Source: research data.

Regarding the age of participants, the youngest subject in the sample was 18 years of age, and the oldest was 58, with a mean age of 25.5 years. Therefore, the majority of the sample, 84 subjects out of the total 165, or 50.91%, were between 20 and 25 years of age, with 36 of them enrolled in the first year and 48 in the fourth year. Another 27 subjects were between 18 and 19 years of age (16.36%), all enrolled in the first year, and the remaining 54 subjects in the sample (32.73%) were aged 26 years and above, enrolled in both the first and fourth years. In other words, the sample consisted mostly of young women.

After the scores were returned from the Center, the process of statistical data analysis based on the instrument's manual and the consulted literature began. This analysis and its results are presented below. However, what Shimizu (2004, p. 13) points out when instruments such as the DIT-2 are used as the sole measurement instrument should be highlighted, as these instruments can "lead us to mistaken and stereotyped conclusions. Therefore, it is concluded that the use of objective and closed measurement instruments should be approached with caution".

Consequently, the author (Shimizu, 2004, p. 13) recommends that analysis of the scores obtained by the instrument be supported by previous studies that have also used it or followed the same approach and that the discussion resulting from this analysis be supported "by various authors who seek to understand how Brazilian society functions." Considering this, to enrich and compare the results presented below, the discussion and final considerations in the last section of this article resort not only to literature on moral development but also to other approaches and analyses, especially those concerning issues of gender, sexuality, human rights, and, particularly based on the results found, religiosity.

RESULTS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL JUDGMENT BY UNDERGRADUATE PEDAGOGY STUDENTS

In order to verify the evolution of the development of moral judgment among the undergraduate students throughout the course and to assess whether there were any changes from the first to the fourth year, the means of the scores related to two of the main indices of the DIT-2 were calculated. These indices include the P Index (Post-Conventional schema/stages 5 and 6) and the N2 Index, as well as the Personal Interest (stages 2 and 3) and Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) schemas, according to the year of enrollment variable. Additionally, Student’s *t*-test was applied to determine whether the differences between the means, considering the investigated variables, were significant, with *p*-values less than or equal to 0.05. In general, considerable differences were found — raising concerns about the education provided by the course — from the perspective of moral development in the variable under consideration.

According to the data presented in Table 2, concerning the P Index (Post-Conventional), which represents the extent to which post-conventional level schema (stages 5 and 6) were used to resolve the dilemmas presented in the instrument, the first year showed a better mean performance ($M1 = 31.71$)² compared to the fourth year ($M2 = 29.26$), which, contrary to what would be expected of students progressing through an undergraduate course, achieved a lower performance. However, the difference was not statistically significant according to Student’s *t*-test.

Table 2 – Results regarding the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) indices according to the year of enrollment in the Pedagogy course and the mean statistical measure.

| | Year | n = subjects | Mean |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| Post-Conventional (P Index) | First year | 92 | 31.7174 |
| | Fourth year | 73 | 29.2603 |
| Personal Interest (stages 2/3) | First year | 92 | 29.6522 |
| | Fourth year | 73 | 33.5616 |
| Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) | First year | 92 | 31.7609 |
| | Fourth year | 73 | 29.1781 |
| N2 score | First year | 92 | 30.3432 |
| | Fourth year | 73 | 27.6864 |

Source: Research data

Consistent with the previous data, the first-year classes had a lower mean ($M1 = 29.26$) adherence to the Personal Interest schema (stages 2/3) compared to the fourth-year classes ($M2 = 33.56$), meaning that, in terms of moral judgment, the first year performed better than the fourth year. With the application of Student’s *t*-test, it was observed that there was significance in the use of this schema, with a low margin of error, as the *p*-value was less than 0.05 ($t = -2.134$; $p < 0.05$).

Regarding the Maintenance of Norms schema (stage 4), the first year showed a higher mean ($M1 = 31.76$) than the fourth year ($M2 = 29.17$). This schema, despite not being preferable due to the existence of a superior quality one, becomes desirable in relation to the previous schema of Personal Interest, where adherence was significant. Nevertheless, it is reiterated that the fourth year, again,

² We will use the abbreviation M1 (with the letter M as an abbreviation of the term “mean”) while the abbreviation M2 will refer to the second group: for example, first year/fourth year, morning/evening, religious/not religious, practicing/not practicing; all, respectively, groups M1 and M2.

presented a lower performance compared to the first, although there was no statistical significance in this schema.

Considering the mean scores of the N2 Index, consistent with the previous data, although also not significant, there was a tendency for the first-year students to show greater adherence to the Post-Conventional schema and to reject arguments from lower levels of moral development ($M1 = 30.34$) than the fourth-year students ($M2 = 27.68$), providing the data analysis with greater reliability.

In summary, based on Table 2, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the scores of first and fourth-year students regarding adherence to the Personal Interest and Maintenance of Norms schemas. This indicates that the education provided in the Pedagogy course investigated here did not exert a positive influence on the level of moral development of its students and, from a more pessimistic perspective, there was a regression throughout the course. Consistent with this, the first-year classes outperformed the fourth year in the P Index (Post-Conventional) and the N2 Index, although without statistical significance.

Given the considerable differences in the performance of moral judgment between first and fourth-year classes, the period variable (morning and evening) of the classes for each of the years was used to verify whether there were also disparities. The result confirmed the hypothesis of disparities between the classes in both the initial and final years of the course.

Based on Table 3, concerning the participants in the first year ($n = 92$), it was observed that, in terms of the P Index, the students in the morning period demonstrated superior performance ($M1 = 33.00$) compared to those in the evening period ($M2 = 31.03$). Regarding the Personal Interest schema, the morning group showed lower adherence ($M1 = 26.50$) than the evening groups ($M2 = 31.33$), with statistical significance in Student's t -test ($t = -2.2$; $p < 0.05$). Regarding adherence to the Maintenance of Norms schema (stage 4), the subjects enrolled in the morning period of the first year achieved a higher performance ($M1 = 33.68$) than the evening period subjects ($M2 = 30.73$). Additionally, there was no statistical significance in the Post-Conventional (P Index) and Maintenance of Norms schemas.

Table 3 – Results regarding the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) indices of subjects in the first year of the Pedagogy course according to the hours of classes and the mean statistical measure.

| | Hours | n = subjects | Mean |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| Post-Conventional (P Index) | Day | 32 | 33.0000 |
| | Evening | 60 | 31.0333 |
| Personal Interest (stages 2/3) | Day | 32 | 26.5000 |
| | Evening | 60 | 31.3333 |
| Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) | Day | 32 | 33.6875 |
| | Evening | 60 | 30.7333 |
| N2 score | Day | 32 | 32.1797 |
| | Evening | 60 | 29.3637 |

Source: research data.

As emphasized in the analysis of the previous table, it can be seen that the morning students' adherence to legalistic level schemas would not be acceptable if their adherence to post-conventional schemas were lower than that of the evening students. However, since these subjects' adherence to the Personal Interest schema is lower than that of the evening subjects, the higher adherence

to maintaining norms becomes tolerable here. In other words, in the case of morning students, adherence to higher-level schemas increases while adherence to lower-level schemas decreases, whereas with the evening students the opposite occurs.

This hypothesis can be confirmed with the N2 Index, where the first group presented higher scores ($M1 = 32.17$) compared to the second ($M2 = 29.36$). Therefore, the first group tended to use the Post-Conventional schema more and also showed greater rejection of the use of lower-level schemas of moral development than the second group, although these differences did not show statistical significance in Student’s *t*-test. Next, the analysis according to the same variable (morning/evening hours) is presented in the table referring to the fourth-year subjects.

Concerning the participants in the fourth year ($n = 73$), Table 4 shows that, regarding the P Index, the morning group of fourth-year students showed higher adherence ($M1 = 31.42$) to the Post-Conventional schema than the evening groups ($M2 = 27.91$). Simultaneously, in the Personal Interest schema (stages 2/3), the morning group had lower adherence ($M1 = 32.71$) than the evening groups ($M2 = 34.08$).

Table 4 – Results regarding the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) indices of fourth-year Pedagogy students according to the hours and the mean statistical measure.

| | Hours | n = subjects | Mean |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| Post-Conventional (P Index) | Day | 28 | 31.4286 |
| | Evening | 45 | 27.9111 |
| Personal Interest (stages 2/3) | Day | 28 | 32.7143 |
| | Evening | 45 | 34.0889 |
| Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) | Day | 28 | 27.4286 |
| | Evening | 45 | 30.2667 |
| N2 score | Day | 28 | 29.3534 |
| | Evening | 45 | 26.6491 |

Source: research data.

This data analysis reflects the logic of Kohlberg’s theory (1992) and the neo-Kohlbergian postulates as verified in the DIT-2 manual (Rest and Narvaez, 1998): the lower the adherence to higher-level schemas of moral development, the higher the adherence to lower-level schemas, and vice versa. With the N2 Index, this observation is further confirmed, indicating that participants in the first group (fourth year/morning hours) tend to reject, based on their responses to the DIT-2, schemas with arguments from lower levels of moral development and prefer those from higher levels.

Therefore, considering the results discussed so far, it is highlighted that besides the fourth-year students performing inferiorly to those in the first year of the investigated Pedagogy course, those enrolled in evening classes demonstrate lower performance than those in morning classes. Regarding the Maintenance of Norms schema (stage 4), participants in the morning hours presented lower performance ($M1 = 27.42$) than those in the evening hours ($M2 = 30.26$). However, it is emphasized that the opposition and correspondence between the P Index and the Personal Interest schema, where one score increases while the other positively decreases for the morning group and negatively for the evening group, ensures reliability in the assertion that the students performed better. Nevertheless, for the hours variable, among the fourth-year students, differences were not statistically significant in any of the indices/schemas.

To ascertain whether the participants' religious affiliations had implications in the development of moral judgment, i.e., whether they use post-conventional schemas when faced with moral dilemmas or prioritize their personal interests, possibly due to the maintenance of and fidelity to their ideologies, the religiosity variable was used to assess their performance in the DIT-2. The results displayed in Table 5, at this point in the analysis, reveal differences that are highly significant, current, and of utmost relevance to the contemporary political and social context.

Table 5 – Results regarding the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) indices of the participating subjects according to religious adherence and the mean statistical measure.

| | Religion | n = subjects | Mean |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------|
| Post-Conventional (P Index) | Religious | 114 | 28.5789 |
| | Not religious | 18 | 39.3333 |
| Personal Interest (stages 2/3) | Religious | 114 | 32.7193 |
| | Not religious | 18 | 28.2222 |
| Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) | Religious | 114 | 31.7544 |
| | Not religious | 18 | 25.3333 |
| N2 score | Religious | 114 | 27.7421 |
| | Not religious | 18 | 35.9233 |

Source: research data.

Regarding adherence to the Post-Conventional schema, that is, the P Index, subjects who adhered to a religion, and more specifically, who subscribed to a specific religion (these subjects being the first portion of the total sample of respondents to this characterization question, present in the questionnaire; $n = 114$), had a lower performance ($M1 = 28.57$) than subjects who did not have a religion ($M2 = 39.33$), the latter being the second portion ($n = 18$) of the total respondents to the characterization question.³

The difference between the scores, already significant, was even greater when the data were extracted from the entirety of the questionnaires answered where the subjects had to indicate which specific religion they were affiliated with. However, for ethical reasons, in the data analysis, all religions recorded by the respondents were grouped into a single category (religious), just as those that did not refer to a religious doctrine (Atheism; Agnosticism) were grouped into another category (not religious). It should be emphasized, however, that subjects who did not affiliate with a specific religion (atheists, for example) had a diverging, superior performance compared to the that of subjects affiliated with specific religions, with a score two-thirds higher than the score of subjects affiliated with one.

Regarding the Personal Interest (stages 2/3) scores, the participants who were religious had a higher performance ($M1 = 32.71$) than those who were not ($M2 = 28.22$), consistent with the previous data in which the first group had lower adherence to the Post-Conventional level while the second group had higher adherence. In addition, the N2 Index confirmed that those participants who were religious tended to reject arguments of higher levels and accept lower ones more easily

³ With regard to the subjects' characterization questions for the extraction of the sample variables, not all participants ($n = 165$) provided their religious affiliation, so, for this analysis, only the DIT-2 scores from those respondents ($n = 132$) were considered, divided into two groups, two categories: religious ($n = 114$) and not religious ($n = 18$).

(M1 = 27.74), while those who were not religious showed the opposite tendency, hence obtaining a higher score in this indicator (M2 = 35.92). The same was observed in the Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) schema, in which the subjects who were religious demonstrated more legalistic judgments (M1 = 31.75) than those who were not religious (M2 = 25.32).

Furthermore, Student’s *t*-test showed significance in three of the four indices/schemas measured by the DIT-2: in the P Index (Post-Conventional) ($t = -3.55$; $p < 0.01$), in the Maintenance of Norms schema ($t = 2.15$; $p < 0.01$), and in the N score ($t = -2.93$; $p < 0.01$). Considering this, another aspect of the religion variable was investigated, the frequency of religious practice, with data presented in Table 6.

Table 6 – Results regarding the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) indices of the participating subjects according to the frequency of religious practice and the mean statistical measure.

| | Religion (frequency) | n = subjects | Mean |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------|
| Post-Conventional (P Index) | Practicing | 86 | 27.4419 |
| | Not practicing | 31 | 32.3871 |
| Personal Interest (stages 2/3) | Practicing | 86 | 33.2791 |
| | Not practicing | 31 | 30.7742 |
| Maintenance of Norms (stage 4) | Practicing | 86 | 32.2326 |
| | Not practicing | 31 | 29.5484 |
| N2 score | Practicing | 86 | 26.9231 |
| | Not practicing | 31 | 30.6474 |

Source: research data.

The total number of subjects who were religious and indicated the frequency of their religious practice in the questionnaire’s characterization questions ($n = 117$) were divided into two groups: practicing ($n = 86$) and non-practicing ($n = 31$). The first group exhibited lower performance (M1 = 27.44) compared to the second (M2 = 32.38) in adherence to the Post-Conventional schema (Index P). From this data, it was inferred that the more a subject practiced their religion, indicating a stronger affiliation with a specific religion, the lower their performance in using arguments of higher levels of moral development.

In the Personal Interest schema (stages 2/3), the practicing subjects had a higher performance (M1 = 33.27) than the non-practicing ones (M2 = 30.77). The same trend was observed in the Maintenance of Norms schema (stage 4), where the first group achieved a higher performance (M1 = 32.23) than the second (M2 = 29.54). Consequently, and in correspondence with the previous data, it can be concluded that the subjects who practiced their religion tended to use the Personal Interest schema more and/or lower levels of moral development.

Additionally, in the N2 Index, the practicing subjects (M1 = 26.92) presented lower scores than the non-practicing subjects (M2 = 30.64). Accordingly, the first group tended to accept arguments of lower levels of moral development more than the second group. Furthermore, according to Student’s *t*-test, there was significance in the Post-Conventional schema ($t = -2.04$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that it was indeed plausible to infer that the practicing subjects adhered less to the Post-Conventional level arguments while the non-practicing subjects adhered more strongly to them, at least in the comparison within the group of religious individuals who completed the subsequent questionnaire item asking about the frequency of their religious practices.

DISCUSSION AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The application of the DIT-2 was based on investigating the ethical formation of teachers undergoing their initial training. Through a cross-sectional empirical investigation, it was possible to analyze the ethical formation, from the perspective of the development of moral judgment, of undergraduate students in a Pedagogy course and thus verify their progression throughout the course. It was also possible to infer, regarding the possible working conditions, that this formation will qualify them in their future professional practice in schools and in the ethical formation of their own students. However, analysis of the data collected by the DIT-2 revealed, at the very least, worrying results.

The normative framework (Brasil, 2006; 2007; 2012; 2013) and the foundational literature consulted (Amorim Neto, 2008; Boon, 2011; Lepre *et al.*, 2014) attribute the ethical formation of students to Higher Education undergraduate courses, particularly Pedagogy. Teaching is considered to be an inherently ethical activity (Caetano and Silva, 2009), and ethics a fundamental precept for the training and practice of professionals in Pedagogy (Benedet, 2000). However, the results obtained indicated that this formation, contrary to what is expected, has not been taking place.

Based on the variables “year of enrollment” and “class hours”, the data suggested that the performance regarding moral development remains stagnant and even suggests a certain regression throughout the course, which draws attention due to the statistically significant differences attested by Student’s *t*-test, with higher scores for first-year subjects in higher-level schemas and lower scores in the Personal Interest schema, in contrast to the fourth year where the opposite occurred. This was also the case with the morning groups, who outperformed the evening ones, both in the first and fourth years. However, given the methodological limitations of our study, we highlight the relativization of this result to some extent. To ensure these indications with confidence, it would be necessary to cross-reference the data found here with other information, preferably qualitative, which would allow us to deepen our interpretative work. Nevertheless, even if only as an indication, it is a worrying result, since it suggests that the formation offered by the investigated course has not exerted a positive influence on the moral development of its students and, in fact, there has been regression throughout the course. However, this indication of a regression would occur in terms of a decrease in preference for higher-level schemas, since the DIT-2 does not “level” subjects in hard stages of development (Rest and Narvaez, 1998), and neither, within the scope of Kohlberg’s theory (1992), is regression in stages possible. There is a need for future investigations to investigate this indication further, combining the aforementioned qualitative techniques with quantitative instruments that integrate its methodology.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that this inference is also only indicative, as such an assertion can only be made more strongly if the same subjects are followed throughout the course, in this case, from the first to the fourth year, in a longitudinal investigation rather than a cross-sectional one. This indication should therefore be seen as a hypothesis based on our study, requiring further research to verify whether this result corresponds to other realities and university environments or whether it is the result of a specific sample and previously investigated environment conditions. However, this result endorses what the aforementioned research framework, which also investigated ethical formation in Higher Education using Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian approaches (Mattos, Shimizu and Bervique, 2008; Shimizu *et al.*, 2010; Bataglia and Bortolanza, 2012; Luczkiewicz, 2015; Santos and Diniz, 2016; Moraes *et al.*, 2017), has generally found: that undergraduate courses “are not adequately or sufficiently providing, in terms of content, strategies, and type of environment,

the moral development and, consequently, the ethical formation of their students” (Lepre *et al.*, 2014, p. 132).

Shimizu *et al.* (2010, p. 38) obtained similar results when applying the DIT-2 with 540 Pedagogy students from two universities in São Paulo, one public and one private, emphasizing that there were no statistically significant differences between the scores of the first and final years, “which indicates that the Pedagogy courses, in the investigated universities, did not influence the level of moral judgment development by their students”. This same result was found by Lepre *et al.* (2014), also with Pedagogy undergraduates.

As mentioned, this does not seem to be a phenomenon present only in the Pedagogy course, but also in other undergraduate programs. This was shown by Mattos, Shimizu, and Bervique (2008) in Psychology, where 104 students from a private university, when responding to the DIT-2 in one year, obtained a lower score in the P Index when they responded to it again the following year, and Luczkiewicz (2015) and Santos and Diniz (2016) in the Accounting Sciences undergraduate program. In these last two studies, the results found in their respective samples are reaffirmed, with graduating students scoring higher in the Personal Interest schema than in higher-level schemas, while the students enrolled in the initial years performed better.

In the case of our sample of Pedagogy undergraduates, it is emphasized that, without sufficient reflective capacity, these future teachers will not be able to rely on ethical principles in the exercise of their profession. Teachers who adhere to lower-level moral development schemas, when faced with dilemmas involving gender and sexualities or other themes, will likely base their decisions on hedonism or legalism according to their personal beliefs.

Regarding the class shifts, Morais *et al.* (2017) also found differences in the moral development of undergraduates enrolled in morning and evening shifts of a Pedagogy course at a public university. They observed that there was less participation from evening students in semi-curricular and extracurricular activities throughout the day compared to morning students, as they work and/or reside in other cities, with no institutional strategies to meet their needs. Therefore, it can be inferred that participation in these activities provides a more solid formation for morning undergraduates, understanding “solid” as a formation in which there is the consolidation of a more elaborate moral development structure (Kohlberg, 1992), hence derived from the greater possibilities of training activities available during the daytime (Morais *et al.*, 2017).

Another equally concerning result, which showed statistical significance more than other variables, was the religious affiliation of the undergraduates. Through the analysis, it was observed that the low performance of the participants in moral development was strongly related to their religious affiliation and the frequency with which they practiced their religion, making it possible to infer that, in the case of the sample investigated, religious affiliation and religious formation may undermine and inhibit the ethical formation. This result is not isolated and endorses the literature cited when investigating the relationship between moral development and religiosity (Shimizu *et al.*, 2010; Lepre *et al.*, 2014; Santos and Diniz, 2016). For example, based on the results found in the Pedagogy course, Lepre *et al.* (2014) emphasize that students without religious affiliation demonstrate higher levels of moral judgment than those affiliated with religious institutions. Our findings, corroborated by this literature, also align with what authors investigating the construct of religiosity and its influence on religious formation have stated (Ernsberger and Manaster, 1981; Rest *et al.*, 1999; Duriez and Soenens, 2006). This inference of the influence of religiosity is serious and corroborates the analysis of Rest *et al.* (1999), which indicates the need to consider the mutual influences of moral judgment development and cultural ideology. According to the authors (Rest *et al.*, 1999), just as moral judgment selects and interprets cultural ideology, this, in turn, affects its progress.

Based on this, they argue that Cultural Psychology and neo-Kohlbergian approaches should ally, initiating various types of studies in this direction, such as the degree of influence that cultural ideology can exert on moral judgment.

According to Duriez and Soenens (2006), several authors seeking to relate religiosity and morality emphasize that these are not independent aspects and have arrived at results indicating that people with religious affiliation demonstrate preferences for the conventional level of moral development and a decrease in preference for the post-conventional level. They also emphasize that religious individuals may present limited moral reasoning, as they do not base it on principles. However, authors (Ernsberger and Manaster, 1981; Duriez and Soenens, 2006; Silva, Brabo and Moraes, 2017, p. 1276) highlight that the moral reasoning of religious individuals depends on their degree of religious commitment and the moral stage that is normative in their religious community, that is, “in a community where teachings include reasoning by principles, highly religious individuals tend to prefer this type of reasoning. Whereas in communities where this type of teaching is not included, this preference will decrease”. Therefore, the theological superiority of conventional moral arguments may surpass the logical superiority of post-conventional arguments. Duriez and Soenens (2006) demonstrate, however, that more than the inclusion and exclusion of transcendence, or even religious affiliation, what influences moral development is the way religious contents are processed, and emphasize that those who do so in a literal and dogmatic way present lower moral levels compared to those who employ symbolic mechanisms of interpretation.

As mentioned in the analysis, these results are highly significant, current, and extremely relevant to the contemporary political and social context, given the recent incursion of religious institutions and groups into the political, including educational, sphere of the country, where topics such as gender and sexuality have been suppressed from official Education documents from this incursion onwards. This fact refers to the removal of the terms gender and sexual orientation from the wording of the *Plano Nacional de Educação* (National Education Plan — PNE) (Brasil, 2014), in a debate that took place nationally between 2014 and 2015; and, more recently, to the suppression of the terms gender, sexualities, and any other issues that promote LGBT citizenship in the wording of the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (National Common Curricular Base — BNCC), also in a controversial debate marked by the strong presence of ultraconservative sectors and religious groups.

According to Furlani (2016), the narrative entitled “gender ideology” emerged from this context, becoming very present during the episode of the PNE, which is based on theoretical confusion and inappropriate uses of gender studies. It was elaborated by these groups to scare and misinform civil society and to delegitimize and ridicule gender studies and people who benefit from and dedicate themselves to the study of the subject.

The results of the DIT-2 demonstrating that religiosity, both affiliation and religious practice, negatively influences the ethical formation of the undergraduates, attest to this phenomenon observed in the context of educational public policies — or at least contribute to a diagnosis in this direction — that questions the quality of the ethical formation of the individuals involved in the elaboration of these policies. In the case of teachers in initial training, they may feel legitimized by the political context and interrupt any possibility of developing their reflective capacity offered in the course and, more than that, their reflective capacity specifically on gender and sexuality issues.

As Silva, Brabo, and Moraes (2017, p. 1268) explain, what fuels the mobilization of the groups leading this incursion into policies are fixations on pre-conventional and conventional levels, since “individuals who exhibit transcendence, and especially religious affiliation, tend to

prefer such levels of moral judgment, while the possibility of adhering to the post-conventional level decreases”. However, the cited authors (Ernsberger and Manaster, 1981; Duriez and Soenens, 2006) caution that, even though this socio-legal relationship is predominantly found among religious individuals, it is due to how they process the statements of their beliefs and doctrines and not merely because of their transcendence or religious affiliation. Therefore, if their reasoning were guided by principles, they would be aware of the possible standardization that their transcendence/religiosity could present toward people who do not share the same belief/doctrine, as well as aware of the freedom that these individuals hold, embedded in a democratic and lawful society. Consequently, they would not prioritize their own interests and the contemplation of their religious ideals over such democratic social demands, nor would they remain indifferent to the oppression that individuals who would benefit from progressive public policy actions are subjected to.

Teachers may also reflect this political scenario and show themselves incapable of providing moments of reflection or acting on principles when faced with topics they disagree with. This problem arises from the conflict between their idiosyncrasies and the affirmation in legal provisions of an ethical formation committed to respecting differences and equality of rights.

These results, therefore, unveil many reflections and demand urgency for proposals for change in teacher education, considering the ethical dimension of the profession. We agree with Puig (2007) when stating that, for this ethical formation to succeed, it is necessary to develop educational practices that (inter)act in and coordinate interpersonal, curricular, and institutional realms. In the interpersonal realm, this involves interpersonal relationships established between students and teachers, while in the curricular realm, it entails addressing moral content within the curriculum so that ethics are treated as objects of knowledge and reflection. Lastly, in the institutional realm, this pertains to the type of environment provided by the educational institution, requiring institutional practices to be reconsidered. Ultimately, educational institutions in general, and specifically teacher education programs, considering the focus of this text, “[...] must build a moral culture that exerts a powerful educational action” (Puig, 2007, p. 94), or else we will continue to encounter data indicating a regression in the moral development level of undergraduates, future educators.

With the research concluded, we have developed a subsequent study proposed as a continuation of the previous one,⁴ initiating a research program to obtain further contributions on the state of this investigated formation and clues on how to improve it. In this subsequent research, now focusing on the formation of psychologists alongside educators, the curricular variable of the degrees under exam is also considered, analyzing whether their curriculum and Pedagogical Political Project enable an ethical formation throughout the course and fulfill what the relevant official documents recommend and stipulate.

Furthermore, with this low performance and the variable of religiosity proving to be very significant, future investigations are suggested regarding the influence of religiosity on moral development and formation in Pedagogy.

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