

Human Values and Morality of Adolescents Who Have Broken the Law: A Multi-Method Study in a Socioeducational Institutional Environment

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Abstract : The increasing urban violence in Brazil involves more and more infractions committed by children and youths. The challenges faced by the institutional environments responsible for the education and resocialization of adolescents in conflict with the law are enormous, especially of those deprived of their liberty. These institutions have an inadequate educational structure. They are characterized by a dirty and unhealthy environment without the minimum basic conditions for their activities, by frequent practices of degradation, humiliation, and the physical and psychological punishment of inmates. This mixed-method study investigated the personal values of adolescents with restriction of freedom in a socio-educational institutional environment aiming to contribute to the development of their morality through an educational process. For that, we used a survey and transdisciplinary play workshops involving thirty-two boys aged between 15 and 19 years old and at least two years out of school. To evaluate the survey the reduced version of the Portrait Questionnaire—PQ21—was used. The workshops happened once a week, lasting 80 minutes each, totaling twelve meetings. By using the game of chess and its metaphors, participants produced texts and engaged in critical brainstorming about their lives. The survey results pointed out that these young people showed a predominance of values of openness to change and self-transcendence, dissatisfaction with one's own reality and surroundings, not considering the consequences of their actions on themselves and others, difficulties in speaking and writing, and desire for changes in their lives. After the pedagogical interventions, these adolescents demonstrated an understanding of the implications of their actions for themselves, for their families, especially for the mothers, with whom they demonstrated stronger bonds. It was possible to observe evidence of improvement in the capacity of linguistic expression, more autonomy and critical vision, including about themselves and their respective contexts. These results demonstrated the educational potential of lively, symbolic, dynamic and playful activities that favor the mediation and identification of these adolescents with their lives, and contribute to the projection of dreams.

Keywords : adolescents arrested, human values, moral development, playful workshops

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