

## ARTICLE

**GENDER IN THE PEDAGOGY FORMATION: CONCEPTIONS OF FUTURE TEACHERS  
BASED ON FIVE CONCEPTS****MATHEUS ESTEVÃO FERREIRA DA SILVA<sup>1</sup>**ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2059-6361>**TÂNIA SUELY ANTONELLI MARCELINO BRABO<sup>2</sup>**ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9833-0635>**ALESSANDRA DE MORAIS<sup>3</sup>**ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5521-9307>

**ABSTRACT:** This article aimed to present the conceptions of undergraduate students in Pedagogy, from a public university in São Paulo, about the concept of gender, relating the concepts evidenced in their conceptions with the production of feminist gender literature. For such, it explores results obtained from an open questionnaire, using the technique of Content Analysis (CA). The participant sample consisted of 165 subjects (N=165), enrolled in the initial and final years of the course, which set the research, which attributed to the investigation the cross-sectional research design. It is noteworthy that the conceptions of the undergraduate students about the concept of gender were distributed in five main concepts: in conception 1) polysemic; 2) biologizing and religious; 3) functionalist; 4) identity; and 5) associated with sexuality. It is concluded that the participants do not have a formation in gender based on the scientific knowledge coming from the productions of the feminist gender literature, with the exception of those who understand gender in the identitarian and functionalist perspectives, but that show themselves in fragile notions and without the evocation of a certain theory or author of the literature.

**Keywords:** Education; Gender; Initial teacher formation; Pedagogy.

**GÊNERO NA FORMAÇÃO EM PEDAGOGIA: CONCEPÇÕES DE FUTURAS(OS) DOCENTES A PARTIR  
DE CINCO CONCEITOS**

**RESUMO:** Este artigo objetivou apresentar as concepções de graduandas(os) em Pedagogia, de uma universidade pública paulista, sobre o conceito de gênero, relacionando os conceitos evidenciados em suas concepções com a produção da literatura de gênero feminista. Para tal, explora-se resultados obtidos a partir de um questionário aberto, utilizando-se da técnica de Análise de Conteúdo (AC). A amostra participante consistiu em 165 sujeitos (N=165), matriculados nos anos inicial e final do curso, que ambientou a pesquisa, o que atribuiu à investigação o desenho transversal de pesquisa. Ressalta-se que as concepções das(os) graduandas(os) sobre o conceito de gênero distribuíram-se em cinco principais conceitos: em concepção 1) polissêmica; 2) biologizante e religiosa; 3) funcionalista; 4) identitária; e 5) associada à sexualidade. Conclui-se que as(os) participantes não detêm uma formação em gênero fundada

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no conhecimento científico proveniente das produções da literatura de gênero feminista, com exceção das(os) que compreendem gênero nas perspectivas identitária e funcionalista, mas que se mostram em noções frágeis e sem a evocação de determinada teoria ou autor(a) da literatura.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação; Gênero; Formação inicial docente; Pedagogia.

## **GÉNERO EN LA FORMACIÓN EN PEDAGOGÍA: CONCEPCIONES DE FUTUROS DOCENTES BASADAS EN CINCO CONCEPTOS**

**RESÚMEN:** Este artículo tuvo como objetivo presentar las concepciones de estudiantes de pregrado en Pedagogía, de una universidad pública de São Paulo, sobre el concepto de género, relacionando los conceptos evidenciados en sus concepciones con la producción de literatura de género feminista. Para este propósito, se exploran los resultados obtenidos de un cuestionario abierto, utilizando la técnica de Análisis de Contenido (AC). La muestra participante consistió en 165 sujetos (N=165) matriculados en los años iniciales y finales del curso que establecieron la investigación, lo que atribuyó el diseño transversal de la investigación a la investigación. Cabe señalar que las concepciones de los estudiantes de pregrado sobre el concepto de género se dividieron en cinco conceptos principales: en la concepción 1) polisémica; 2) biologizante y religioso; 3) funcionalista; 4) identidad; y 5) asociado con la sexualidad. Se concluye que las participantes no tienen una capacitación en género basada en el conocimiento científico de las producciones feministas de literatura de género, con la excepción de aquellas que entienden el género en las perspectivas identitarias y funcionalistas, pero que se muestran en nociones frágiles y sin evocar una teoría particular o autor de la literatura.

**Palabras clave:** Educación; Género; Formación inicial del profesorado; Pedagogía.

## **INTRODUCTION: FROM RESEARCH TO THE PRESENT PRODUCTION**

This article is the result of a completed research, developed between 2017 and 2018, which was funded by the Foundation for Research Support of the State of São Paulo (FAPESP)<sup>4</sup>. In this research, in summary, it was aimed to investigate the formation of undergraduate students in Pedagogy on the themes of gender and sexualities and their attitudes towards sexual and gender diversity at school. At the same time, the research also aimed to relate this formation on the themes of the group participating in the research with their ethical formation, from the point of view of moral development, in the Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian approaches (Lawrence KOHLBERG, 1992; Moshe M. BLATT; KOHLBERG, 1975; James REST et al., 1999).

Interdisciplinary in nature and linked to the fields of study and knowledge: 1) Human Rights Education, 2) Gender Studies and 3) Psychology of Moral Development, the research had its development culminated in the midst of a heated debate waged nationwide for the removal of the terms *gender* and *sexual orientation* from the Municipal, State and National Education Plans, a debate held between the years 2014 and 2015, at the time of public policy making. At the time, not only recent researches

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<sup>4</sup> The research was entitled Human rights education, gender and sexualities, and moral development in teacher education: knowledge, conceptions and behaviors of undergraduate students in Pedagogy from a public university in the state of São Paulo, funded by FAPESP by process no. No. 2017/01381-9 and in force from 01/05/2017 to 31/12/2018 in the line of promotion of Regular Programs of Scholarships in the Country in Continuous Flow, and held under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Tânia Suely Antonelli Marcelino Brabo and Prof. Dr. Alessandra de Moraes. Available at: <https://bv.fapesp.br/pt/bolsas/170898/educacao-em-direitos-humanos-genero-e-sexualidades-e-desenvolvimento-moral-na-formacao-docente-co/>

pointed out difficulties for the effectiveness of human rights education together with issues related to human diversity in educational institutions, but also the political situation pointed out the resistance in relation to these themes by those responsible for the development of public policies for the Brazilian educational system, as we pointed out in previous work (Matheus Estevão Ferreira da SILVA; Tânia Suely Antonelli Marcelino BRABO; Alessandra de MORAIS, 2017).

In the research, the themes of gender and sexualities were addressed as an issue of human rights education (HRE), an educational proposal legally deferred in the country since 2006 (BRASIL, 2007; 2012; 2013). Focused on social transformation and the formation of subjects of rights, with a forecast for development at all levels of education, the proposal of HRE is oriented so as to contemplate other issues – beyond the homonymous theme it bears – such as gender and sexualities, but which must be developed together with and from the perspective of human rights.

In its wording, the National Plan for Human Rights Education (PNEDH), one of the basic documents of human rights education in the country, defines, as one of its objectives, the overcoming of inequalities affirmed in national history, many of them characterized by “[...] ethnic-racial, religious, cultural, generational, territorial, physical-individual, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, political option intolerance, among others” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 21).

Thus, when working with human rights education, addressing gender and sexualities is dealing with the rights of the subjects that are protagonists of both themes: women and LGBTs<sup>5</sup>, in addition to several other issues that permeate the themes. One of the hypotheses, confirmed in our empirical research, was that when HRE is accompanied by the two themes related to diversity, it has even fewer chances of being effective, since its approach in educational institutions depends on the knowledge and dispositions that teachers maintain, among the main professionals responsible for this approach, towards the themes and their protagonists.

When we examine, specifically, the formation in Pedagogy, we come across experiences such as that of Roney Polato de Castro (2016, p. 208, our emphasis), in which he brings the following account of one of the interviewees of his doctoral research on the positioning of teachers before the expression of gender identity (which they associated with sexuality) of one of the students of the school that set the mentioned research:

I was in a kindergarten school and on my way to the teachers' room I came across the following scene: a group of teachers making disparaging remarks about a student they said was a 'little faggot'. The 'teachers' [...] were laughing and saying that the boy looked like a fag in the entrance line and that when he grew up, he wouldn't escape being gay. I was even embarrassed to hear their words regarding the student.

It is emphasized that if the teacher has such knowledge and disposition<sup>6</sup> towards her student, there will be no way for her to work on human rights education effectively, much less on gender and sexualities. Therefore, the relevance of the work of the professional in Pedagogy is placed by the school of Kindergarten and Elementary I – levels of education charged to the pedagogue –, to be the first “[...] agent of collective socialization towards diversity outside the family, where the human rights education begins. If from there this education is damaged or distorted, the precepts foreseen by this education will definitely not be consolidated” (SILVA; BRABO; MORAIS, 2017, p. 1279).

During the empirical stage of the research, among the instruments we used for data collection to meet the criteria and objectives set out, these were, respectively, focus groups, a qualitative research technique; a questionnaire, a quantitative instrument, which was designed so as to compose open

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<sup>5</sup> In this article we will use the acronym LGBT to refer to LGBTQIA+ sexual and gender diversity, which includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and so on. Historically in Gender Studies, it was women who first protagonized the theorizations of the field, and only later the LGBT population was included.

<sup>6</sup> As in previous work, dispositions are understood here as the “[...] evaluative positions that a subject has about a certain object, which can be an idea, a concept, behavior, etc., positions that generate particular predispositions in relation to this object and that can be positive or negative to it” (Matheus Estevão Ferreira da SILVA, 2020, p. 71).

questions and moral dilemmas in the Kohlbergian proposal (BLATT; KOHLBERG, 1975); and the *Defining Issues Test 2* (DIT-2), a closed and validated quantitative instrument for measuring moral judgment.

Then, having understood the research proposal, for the production of this article, we decided to present partial results obtained with the application of the questionnaire, as well as to outline some considerations about the elaboration process of this instrument. The application of the questionnaire was aimed specifically at the fulfillment of the first part of the research objective, that is, to investigate the formation of the participating subjects – graduate students in Pedagogy – in gender and sexualities, in order to understand the state of this formation, whether satisfactory or not based on relevant literature and official documents.

The open questions were inserted in the questionnaire to extract the conceptions (and, consequently, the knowledge that constitutes these conceptions) that the subjects have about the themes, while the moral dilemmas were inserted to collect the possible behaviors of the same subjects before the public of diversity in question. Due to the impossibility of producing a discussion covering all the results achieved with the instrument, it was necessary to assign some kind of cut to this text and, therefore, we decided to approach the results obtained in only one of the open questions of the questionnaire, which asked about the concept of gender.

Thus, delimiting the scope of this article in the exposition of the results achieved from the analyses made in the numerous data collected by the also numerous instruments used in the research, this text aims to present the conceptions of Pedagogy undergraduate students from a public university in São Paulo about the concept of gender, relating the concepts evidenced in their conceptions with the production of the feminist gender literature consulted.

Based on the literature review we did in the *CAPEES* (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel)<sup>7</sup> *Periodical Portal* and *SciELO* (*Scientific Electronic Library Online*) databases, during the consultation and substantiation in the referred literature, we found a few pertinent works (articles) with similar proposals to the present production that deserve to be cited here. Using the descriptors *gender* and *Pedagogy* and delimiting the search to works in Portuguese language, in *CAPEES*' Portal of Periodicals we found 18 works that share these descriptors in the title, and only 02 of them (Nilson Fernandes DINIS; Roberta Ferreira CAVALCANTE, 2008; Ana Paula COSTA; Paulo Rennes Marçal RIBEIRO, 2011) share the proposal to investigate the formation of undergraduate and graduate students in Pedagogy about the concept of gender. With the same descriptors, in *SciELO*, we found a total of 05 works, also 02 specific to the proposal in common, the same ones found in the previous search.

In their text, Dinis and Cavalcante (2008) discuss conceptions of undergraduate students in Pedagogy of the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) about the themes *homosexuality* and, here our focus, *gender*. In a different way from the authors, we opted for not disclosing the name of the university that had its Pedagogy course investigated by our research, for ethical questions, being enough to know that this is a public university located in the state of São Paulo that, as for its Pedagogy course, with four years of duration, admits (entrants) and graduates (graduating students) around 120 students per year.

In the text by Costa and Ribeiro (2011), the authors researched the conceptions about *gender relations* of a group of students of the Pedagogy course of the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP), Araraquara *campus*, who already worked, however, in school education as teachers. Also, in a different way from the authors, besides the non-disclosure of the university where the research took place, their investigation had as its object the continued teacher education, due to the fact that their public already worked in teaching, while the public of our research was still in a state of initial formation. Both works (DINIS; CAVALCANTE, 2008; COSTA; RIBEIRO, 2011), resulting from researches also recent and with the same object (formation in Pedagogy) and proposal (*what they think* about gender) of investigation, certainly supported the present production.

Two other productions consulted also ended up presenting this support function due to their relevance and investigative similarity, which were Marília Pinto de Carvalho (2011), who discusses

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<sup>7</sup> Free translation of Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior.

different *concepts of gender* provided by authors cited in papers presented at the national meetings of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPED) from 1999 to 2009; and Maria Eulina Pessoa de Carvalho and Glória Rabay (2015), who problematize the *misunderstandings of gender* generated by its use in various contexts.

From the composition of this article, we first describe the methodology of our empirical investigation, regarding the process of developing and applying the questionnaire. We also dealt with the open question selected, among the several that composed the questionnaire, which resulted in a fruitful review of the concept of gender based on the conceptions of the participants presented here, rescuing concepts present both in the feminist gender literature and in the daily life of these people.

It is emphasized, based on the results obtained with the analysis of the data collected with the questionnaire, that the conceptions of the responding undergraduate students (n=109) about the concept of gender were distributed in five main concepts: in conception 1) polysemic; 2) biologizing and religious; 3) functionalist; 4) identity; and 5) associated with sexuality. The consultation and grounding in the literature in question – which is presented as we discuss these conceptions found –, amid the profusion and theoretical heterogeneity of the feminist production in the field of Gender Studies, was guided according to the demand of the concepts evidenced in the conceptions of the participants, although some of these evidenced concepts required grounding in productions of other literature of the field, whose theoretical perspectives are not considered feminist in the study of gender.

## **METHODOLOGY: DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF INSTRUMENTS, SAMPLES AND FORMS OF ANALYSIS**

As a cutout of an empirical investigation that, considering its whole, consisted of a larger field work, we delimited this article to the exposition of the results obtained with one of the instruments used: the open-ended questionnaire. The elaboration of this questionnaire during the research was done based on four procedures: based on 1) the results obtained in two focus group sessions with undergraduate students from the same course that set up the research, a previous moment of the fieldwork; 2) the literature consulted on the themes addressed by the instrument, gender and sexualities; 3) the questioning of two instrument judges; and 4) the application of a pilot test of the questionnaire. Only after the four procedures of this preliminary stage of the fieldwork were completed, did we begin to apply the questionnaire.

As already mentioned, the questionnaire was composed of open questions and moral dilemmas for collection and, consequently, analysis of the investigated formative process both on the abstract level - what they think about the themes of gender and sexualities - which here corresponds to the category conceptions; and on the level of disposition to action - how they would act when facing sexual and gender diversity -, understood by the category behaviors. The creation of the questions and dilemmas had as a reference, besides the previous stage of focus groups<sup>8</sup>, the literature, eminently feminist, consulted on the themes addressed by the instrument.

However, Daniel Abud Seabra Matos and José Rubens Lima Jardimino (2016, p. 23, our emphasis) point out that:

In research on what students, teachers and other educational actors think, a wide variety of terms have been used to refer to mental representations. We find terms such as: conceptions, concepts, beliefs, images, metaphors, perceptions, orientations, perspectives, categories, constructs, knowledge, cultures, repertoires, theories, representations, among others. [...] this diversity of words makes it difficult to understand research in the educational area and its theoretical-conceptual framework.

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<sup>8</sup> It is not our place here to discuss the results found with the application of the two focus group sessions and specify them in detail on how they subsidized the development of the questionnaire. However, for reference purposes, part of these results are published in (Matheus Estevão Ferreira da SILVA, 2019).

By choosing the three categories, knowledge, conceptions and behaviors, in our methodology, we considered the clarifications brought by the authors (2016). We verified, in our own literature review, that the researches that use these three categories, in fact, are not clear about what they mean by them and, thus, do not provide concepts that can support them in the scope of their investigation, making use of the generic concept that is evoked by the word. As a self-criticism, this lack of theoretical-methodological rigor is present, even in some previous research developed and oriented in the Research Centers and Groups we are part of.

Therefore, in our investigation, we attributed our own concept to each of the categories we used, supporting them with a certain referential of the qualitative research approach (Menga LÜDKE; Marli ANDRÉ, 1986) in which we delved: the Hermeneutics – although we do not include here a more complete discussion due to the limits of this text. Defined as the theory or philosophy of meaning interpretation, recognizing itself in the “[...] perception that human expressions contain a significant component, which has to be recognized as such by a subject and transposed to his or her own system of values and meanings” (Josef BLEICHER, 2002, p. 13), the three categories are inserted in this field of meaning interpretation, regarding the investigation of the attribution of meanings and generation of concepts by people in their culture.

Therefore, conceptualizing these categories, we argue that the teachers’ dispositions, that is, their possible practices, the action they will perform, are preceded by the conceptions they holds about the content to be worked on. It is from a previous conception, which is constituted by the various types of knowledge that the teachers had contact with during their professional and personal formation, that they practice (referring to the conduct category) as an educator is materialized.

Maewa Martina Gomes da Silva e Souza (2010, p. 14) corroborates this idea by pointing out that the conceptions of a person are responsible for producing “[...] different forms of treatment to individuals [...] each concept designates a different practice, which leads us to realize how a definition, a conception permeates a practice, a life style”, being one of the few works we found that conceptualizes the category conceptions to which it makes use. Thus, the more the teacher's conception of gender is constituted by emancipatory scientific knowledge – in this case, coming from a science with preferentially feminist emancipatory project (Sandra HARDING; 1986; Conceição NOGUEIRA; 2017) – the more chances her/his conduct, then originating from this conception, has to be satisfactory in the treatment of sexual and gender diversity at school and in the development of a work that addresses the theme.

To contemplate these categories, the questionnaire was composed with a total of 18 open questions and 03 moral dilemmas. With the questionnaire prepared, before its application, we corroborated the suggestions of Marina de Andrade Marconi and Eva Maria Lakatos (2003, p. 203) about the evaluation of the instrument by judges and the performance of a pre-test: “after being written, the questionnaire needs to be tested before its definitive use, applying some copies in a small chosen population”. We first conducted a pilot test with five undergraduate students of the same course, but who would not participate in the research at any other time – such as the participants of the focus groups – selecting them through random sampling (Antonio Carlos GIL, 2008).

After the pre-test, the questionnaire was evaluated by two judges, a researcher and a researcher active in the themes addressed by the instrument and with experience in working with moral dilemmas in research. With both procedures, it was seen that the questionnaire followed and contemplated its purpose in fulfilling the research objectives. Thus, with the elaboration of the instrument finally concluded, we proceeded to its application.

The application was made in the Pedagogy course of a public university in São Paulo, a course chosen by convenience criteria. The participants were selected by means of step sampling, which “[...] can be used when the population is composed of units that can be distributed in several stages” (GIL, 2008, p. 93). From the step sampling, it was elected for participation in the research: the three classes of the first year (beginners) and the three of the fourth year (concluding students), one from the morning period and two from the evening period respectively, which gave the research the cross-sectional research design.

The completed questionnaires were collected and, after transcribing the answers into a textual material that generated our *corpus* of analysis, we verified a total of 165 valid questionnaires, totaling a sample of 165 subjects (N=165), part of the 120 students enrolled in the first year and the 120 in the fourth year of the course.

In the questionnaire, before the open questions and the moral dilemmas, there were also some closed questions to characterize the respondent, in the identification of the variables of the research sample. To account for these variables, the answers given to such characterization questions were transcribed to a spreadsheet generated by the SPSS© *software* (STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, 2017), and the accounting of the variables that we considered main was arranged in the following table.

**Table 1 – Characterization of the questionnaire sample**

Variables	N.º of participants
Year of Enrollment	92 (55,7 %) entrants
	73 (44,3%) graduates
Gender	156 (94,5%) feminine
	9 (5,5%) masculine
Period	60 (36,4%) morning
	105 (63,6%) night
Are you oriented or developing research on gender	3 (1,8%) yes
	162 (98,2%) no
Religion	17 (12,9%) Cristian
	58 (43,9%) Catholic
	31 (23,5%) Evangelical
	6 (4,5%) Spiritualist
	1 (0,8%) Mormon
	1 (0,8%) Umbanda
	7 (5,3%) Agnostic
11 (8,3%) Atheist	
Race-ethnicity	4 (3,0%) Yellow
	73 (54,9%) White
	46 (34,6%) Brown
	10 (7,5%) Black
<b>Total</b>	<b>165 (100%)</b>

Source: Research data

**Legend:** The table presents the characterization of the sample of our research, according to the variables that we consider the main ones, which are: year of enrollment (55.7% entrants and 44.3% completers), gender (94.5% female and 5.5% male), period (36.4% morning and 63.6% evening), whether research on gender (1.8% yes and 98.2% no), religion (12.9% Christian, 43.9% Catholic, 23.5% Evangelical, 4.5% Spiritualist, 0.8% Mormon, 0.8% Umbanda, 5.3% Agnostic, and 8.3% Atheist), and race-ethnicity (3.0% Yellow, 54.9% White, 34.6% Brown, 7.5% Black).

In our research, the themes of gender and sexualities were treated as *content*, that is, as a set of knowledge formed and accumulated historically by humanity and that can be acquired by people in order to compose their intellectual heritage. This observation is necessary due to another possibility of

treating both themes: as *perspective* (Leonardo LEMOS DE SOUZA, 2017). Gender and sexualities as perspective, in synthesis, refer to the way the themes insert themselves in people's lives and bodies. Thus, in addition to content, they also become *social markers* (or *variables*, treating them for statistical purposes), that is, they refer to manifestations of characteristics and social constructions in subjects that intersect and hierarchize in different cultures (NOGUEIRA, 2017). Subjects can be marked both by gender, marked as male or female, cisgender or transgender in general, and non-binary; and by sexuality, marked as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual<sup>9</sup>.

In research, instead of a treatment of mental representations in a generic sense, *what they think*, as occurs with gender and sexualities as content – and as we did here – an investigation that treats them as perspective would address *who thinks what?* So, even considering the variables of the participating subjects, our focus in this text is on what they think about gender as content, gender as perspective being a proposal for another production.

With the characterization of the sample that answered the questionnaire (N=165), we identified that this research public was mostly female (n=156; 94.5%), considering the consolidation of the Pedagogy course as an exclusively female space in the history of teaching in Brazil, as Tânia Suely Antonelli Marcelino Brabo (2005) argues about the feminization process of the teaching profession. Also, the participants were mostly enrolled in the evening period (n=105; 63.6%), due to the larger number of evening classes in opposition to the morning ones (n=60; 36.4%), and in the first year of the course (n=92; 55.7%), because of the larger adhesion to the research of the entrants than the graduates.

According to the variable religiosity, the majority of the sample presents transcendence, being linked to Christianity (n=113; 85.6%), but with all the strands of this religion, which were mentioned by the subjects, included in this data, as can be seen in Table 1. In a smaller number, Agnostic transcendence (n=7; 5.3%) and non-transcendence, that is, Atheism (n=11; 8.3%), were mentioned. Regarding the race-ethnicity variable, the majority declared themselves as White (n=73; 54.9%) and Brown (n=46; 34.6%).

Finally, regarding the forms of analysis employed on the data collected by the questionnaire, for its organization and interpretation, besides having as a base the feminist gender literature, whose consulted authors will be evidenced as the conceptions found are discussed, we made use of specific analysis techniques according to the need evidenced in each question of the elaborated instrument. As already mentioned, we delimited the exposition of this text to only the abstract plane of the investigated formative process, that is, the conceptions of the participants collected by the open questions, and, even more specifically, to question number 03 of the questionnaire: "What do you understand by gender? That is, what is gender for you? In this question, as in most of the open-ended questions, we employed the categorical analysis technique of Content Analysis (CA) (Lawrence BARDIN, 2016).

Bardin (2016, p. 14) defines CA as a set of techniques for the analysis, plural, "[...] of communications, which uses systematic and objective procedures to describe the content of messages." From this plurality of techniques that constitutes Content Analysis, we used the one called *categorical analysis*. With it, following its procedures systematically, we could identify the meanings attributed by the participants to the concept of gender, generating five categories created from *indicators*, being chosen the ones of the *theme* type, extracted from our *corpus* of analysis.

Thus, each one of the five categories generated by means of the CA referred to a different conception of the graduating students about the concept of gender, with its identification supported by the production of the consulted literature. Due to the considerable number of subjects participating in the research, therefore, of a large sample size for a qualitative technique like this, we also calculated the frequency of evocation of each category by the sample. Having characterized our methodology and the fieldwork carried out, we will now proceed to the exposition of the analyses and results obtained with the selected question from the questionnaire with the subjects participating in the Pedagogy course.

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<sup>9</sup> We use this nomenclature aware of its insufficiency in contemplating the innumerable expressions of gender identity and sexual orientation. Such nomenclature agglutinates the identity possibilities in restricted identity groups, as questioned by the queer and post-structuralist perspectives of the feminist gender literature about gender binarism and the coherence and belonging to a certain identity that is intelligible (BUTLER, 2007; Matheus Estevão Ferreira da SILVA; Tânia Suely Antonelli Marcelino BRABO, 2016).



## GENDER IN THE POLYSEMY OF THE WORD

The question that interrogated the respondent about the concept of gender was inserted in the questionnaire for presenting great relevance to our research, since, in the analysis of the education in Pedagogy, it is the conception of this professional that will subsidize her/his future teaching performance in the school context with the theme of gender itself and the public of diversity that plays a leading role. However, today boasting a concept constantly debated and redefined, the insertion of gender in different proposals in teacher education and, more than that, its understanding in training courses, are still seen as a challenge, as discussed in recent research (UNESCO, 2015; SILVA; BRABO; MORAIS, 2017).

And for these debates and re-signification, which remain open, it would be more appropriate to talk about concepts of gender, in plural, given the variety of meanings that are assigned to the word gender contemporarily. In this sense, the first category that represented the undergraduates' conceptions about the concept of gender, which we identified based on the CA technique and the pertinent literature, was entitled Gender in the polysemy of the word. In the following chart, we portray this category, constituted from the indicators extracted from the answers given by the participants, also portrayed (some of them) in the chart.

**Chart 1 – Representative category of the polysemic conception of gender of the participants about the concept of gender**

Category	Indicators
<p><b>1. Gender in the polysemy of the word:</b> the term gender evokes more than one concept, it is a polysemic word, it presents more than one meaning, but holds its primary classificatory meaning, it refers to the classification of animate and inanimate beings into groups and sets by sharing one or more characters in common <b>(20; 18,34%; n=109)</b></p>	Subject 29 - Genres such as musical, cultural, etc.
	Subject 42 - Set that is connected by a common origin.
	Subject 43 - They are similar things, from the same origin.
	Subject 48 - Gender is a particularity, a characteristic that unites a certain group/set.
	Subject 71 - Gender, has several meanings, but it is something different, what differentiates one from another, etc.
	Subject 98 - Set of beings, connected by the same or similar origin of a particularity.
	Subject 125 - Gender is a way of classifying something.
	Subject 142 - It is the diversity of options. In grammar I understand gender by various textual types and in social relations I understand gender by sexual options (male, female, gay, lesbian, trans, etc.).
Subject 144 - Both in the human issue and in the textual issue (genres of discourse) gender is a denomination to "choices".	

Source: Research data

**Legend:** The chart presents the first category identified representative of the conceptions of gender of the participants about the concept of gender, entitled *Gender in the polysemy of the word*, together with the indicators extracted from the answers that generated this category. The category was formed from the indicators of 20 of the 109 subjects who answered question number 3 of the questionnaire, which concerned 18.34% of this sample.

Based on Chart 1, it is observed that of the total number of research participants (N=165), only 109 subjects answered the question in question. In the depicted conception, indicators extracted from the answers of 20 subjects came to constitute it, being 18.34% of the total of respondents. This conception of gender points to the conceptual plurality that the word currently bears, that is, to its polysemy, as an ambiguous word, with more than one meaning and context of use, due to the broad historical trajectory in the development of its meaning. However, at the same time that we point to such polysemy, we also highlight the initial meaning attributed to gender, which remains common to almost all the most modern concepts of gender, preceding them: classification.

The meaning of classification in genre is present since its etymology. The word gender has roots in the Indo-European base: *gen-* or *gnê-* which means *to be born* and *to generate*. Later, with the origin of the Latin language, it extends from the Latin *genus*, *-eris*, meaning *birth, descent, origin, race* and *lineage* (Antonio Geraldo da CUNHA, 1982). Evidence of these classificatory roots is evident in the arguments of subjects 71 and 125.

According to Ana Lúcia Furquim Campos-Toscano (2009, p. 22), the etymology brings the “[...] reiteration of terms like 'category', 'classification', 'division', 'characteristics', 'style', denotes that the concept of gender does not go beyond the notion of species, remaining, therefore, inscribed as a category of classification of common traits”. Therefore, the group resulting from such a selection by common characteristics is called genus. And dating back to the Greco-Latin Antiquity period, genre is now used to classify artistic works, including musical, literary, poetic, theatrical, etc. genres, perpetuating throughout time, which was present in the argumentation of subject 29.

According to Armando Plebe (1978) and Carvalho (2011), in the realm of language and grammar, words were also classified, starting from the studies of the Greek philosopher Protagoras of Abdera, into three genders: as feminine, masculine and neutral. About the latter, Dante Lucchesi (2009, p. 295) clarifies that in the “[...] formation of Romance languages, there was a transition from a tripartite system found in the so-called classical Latin to a system based on the opposition between masculine and feminine, with the disappearance of the neuter”.

Through the classification in language, expressed by the opposition feminine-masculine, gender acquired another meaning, giving rise to a new concept: of synonymy to biological sex. This concept was also present in the understandings of the research sample, which is explored below.

It is worth noting that not necessarily the conception of gender of a subject covers only one single concept of the several attributed to gender, that is, it fits only in one of the categories we identified, as illustrated in the full argumentation of subject 142, which had two indicators, purposely inserted in Chart 1. This subject's conception, for example, is linked to the present category, the polysemic concept of gender, and to the category that associates gender with sexual desire, which we will also discuss later.

## **GENDER IN BIOLOGICAL CONCEPTION, AS A SYNONYM FOR SEX AND FREQUENT ASSOCIATION WITH RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE**

While in the first conception of gender identified, its conceptual plurality is admitted, but pointing to its initial and almost common meaning of classification, the next conception referred to a specific concept of gender: for the subjects who hold this conception, gender is the same as sex. Indicators extracted from the answers of 30 subjects, 27.52% of the total respondents, generated the representative category of this conception, which was entitled Gender in biological conception, as a synonym of sex and frequent association with religious discourse.

The studies on the sexual differences between women and men emerged as of the end of the 18th century, first exclusively under the biological approach of positivist science, which would later establish the modern concept of sex. According to Fabíola Rohden (2003, p. 201), from these studies on, sexual difference “is considered natural and unchangeable by science. This emphasis on naturalness would be related to the transformations that took place as of the end of the 18th century [...] which required changes in the established gender relations”.

From the biological point of view, the differences between women and men are measured through the category sex, in which living beings are classified as male, female or intersex, according to the set of structural and functional characteristics that their bodies present, referring mainly to the production of gametes, the reproductive apparatus and the secondary sexual characters resulting from hormones. This conceptualization of sex is attributed to gender, for example, by subjects 31 and 63, as shown in the following chart.

**Chart 2 – Representative category of the participants' biologizing and religious conception of gender about the concept of gender**

Category	Indicators
<p><b>2. Gender in biological conception, as synonym of sex and frequent association to religious discourse:</b> gender and sex are synonyms or gender, as identity, is defined by the sex at birth, manifesting itself as biologically determined, biological determinism is used with frequent association to the Christian religious discourse for its legitimization, the biological discourse is fused to the religious one <b>(30; 27,52%; n=109)</b></p>	Subject 1 - Gender is the sex you are, that defines man or woman.
	Subject 24 - That a man is born a man, and a woman is born a woman.
	Subject 31 - Gender has to do with the sexual organ that each person has, determined like that.
	Subject 51 - A certain sex.
	Subject 63 - Gender is connected with the biological side of the human being, that is, if he presents in the DNA as XX or XY.
	Subject 64 - From the anatomical and physiological point of view, gender is the sex by which the baby is formed, the female and male genders.
	Subject 73 - I connect gender to something primarily biological linked to the characteristics of our body at the time we are born.
	Subject 95 - Gender is the role a person occupies in society relative to their sex the way God made them, male or female.
	Subject 157 - Gender is when you are born if you are born with the male organ, you are of the male gender, if you are born with the female organ, you are of the female gender.

Source: Research data

**Legend:** The chart presents the second category identified representative of the conceptions of gender of the participants about the concept of gender, entitled *Gender in biological conception, as synonymous with sex and frequent association with religious discourse*, together with the indicators extracted from the answers that generated this category. The category was formed from the indicators of 30 of the 109 subjects who answered question number 3 of the questionnaire, which concerned 27.52% of this sample.

The reference to the concept of sex under the nomenclature of gender, however, is due to the use of gender to classify language in the masculine-feminine opposition. It was from this that, historically, gender started to denote the content of what was scientifically understood at the time as feminine and masculine, that is, the sexes male and female, then the founding categories – in the biological conception – of male and female identities. Such conception was consolidated until today, in which gender “[...] has become practically synonymous with ‘sex’ in common and even academic language” (CARVALHO; RABAY, 2015, p. 119), as verified in the argumentation of subjects 1 and 51.

In this conception, as depicted in Chart 2, only the biology of the bodies is admitted as defining human identity, denying any other variable, including social construction, which could, along

with biology, exert influence on *being a man and being a woman*. Nevertheless, according to this biologizing conception, even the social relations established between women and men are a result of their sexual differences, as can be seen in the indicators of subjects 24 and 157, in an implicit way, but still observable in their arguments.

For Guacira Lopes Louro (1997, p. 21) “Whether in the realm of common sense, or coated by a ‘scientific’ language, the biological distinction, or rather the sexual distinction, serves to understand – and justify – social inequality”. This is, therefore, a genuinely determinist (innatist) conception of gender, imported from the modern concept of sex and linked to *biological determinism*: based on the belief that physiology and the entire sexual biological apparatus are responsible for the way women and men relate to, distribute, and act in society, justifying aspects (which, in fact, are) historical and cultural, which is very suggestive about how the subjects, whose indicators gave rise to this category, conceive gender relations and the public of sexual and gender diversity.

In some of the indicators, however, as is the case of subject 95 and also indicators that did not appear in **Chart 2**, the biological conception was related to postulates of Christian religiosity. Since they start from deterministic ideals, although with their incongruous sources (the positivist scientific method and the so-called sacred scriptures), the biological and religious discourse was merged only to legitimize the identity binarism between woman and man. What should be an impossible amalgam, here has been made possible, as has also been found in the discourse of sectors that recently promote the “gender ideology” narrative (Jimena FURLANI, 2016b; SILVA; BRABO; MORAIS, 2017) and, through this, misinformation on the gender theme, delegitimizing and ridiculing the theme and the subjects that protagonize it.

It is worth noting that the “gender ideology” was created by sectors of the Catholic Church and the (inter)national movement self-named “Pro-Life and Pro-Family Movement” and is sustained on “theoretical confusions and inappropriate uses of gender studies, intentional and meticulously calculated misunderstandings of the trajectory of conceptual development of the theme and the actual literature that establishes it” (SILVA; BRABO; MORAIS, 2017, p. 1268). It is premised on criminalizing and “destining to hell” any manifestation of gender that is not in accordance with its postulates of religious origin. Thus, what should be private (the option to guide one's life by religious precepts), has been reevoked by those who promote it as public (forcing everyone to follow such precepts, even including them in public policies and using them as an argument to bar policies that are not in accordance with them).

In this sense, this narrative was strongly incorporated during the episode of removal of the terms *gender* and *sexual orientation* from the Education Plans, from Municipal, State and National, especially by parliamentarians connected to conservative and religious sectors, and it seems to be closely related to the answers of the subjects that constituted the present conception of gender. For this narrative, gender is defined by biological sex, which would be supported by the Christian sacred scriptures (thus mixing biological and religious postulates), and any variation of this would be characterized as a deviation, a profane act, at the same time that it denies, distorts and ridicules the contributions of Gender Studies, especially those of feminist orientation, for the understanding of the gender diversity issue.

## **GENDER CLOSE TO ITS CLASSICAL ACADEMIC FUNCTIONALIST CONCEPTION**

The next representative category was constituted from the indicators of the answers of 37 subjects, 33.94% of the total of respondents, calling it Gender close to its classical academic functionalist conception. Of the conceptions exposed in this article, this is the one that is most aligned with the perspective we defend, which is the feminist one, to ground the gender training of the teachers responsible for school education, due to its potentially emancipatory and critical character. Although it aligns, it does not, in fact, correspond to the perspective we defend, since the simple distinction between the biological and the social, core of this conception of gender, “[...] is relatively simplified to account for the different possibilities of the current feminist debate” (NOGUEIRA, 2017, p. 47).

**Chart 3 – Representative category of the participants' functionalist conception of gender about the concept of gender**

Category	Indicators
<b>3. Gender close to its classical academic functionalist conception:</b> gender is a social construction polarized in an identity binarism, female and male, it is culturally and historically formed based on observable sexual differences between subjects, it is a complementarity to the natural sex of people, gender is the social and sex is the biological <b>(37; 33,94%; n=109)</b>	Subject 6 - Gender is what identifies and differentiates men and women, male gender and female gender.
	Subject 50 - Gender is a social construction. It is a socially and culturally forged category to make what is called "feminine" and "masculine".
	Subject 60 - Gender is the social position you find yourself in.
	Subject 65 - Social combination according to the physical characteristics that establish difference between each other.
	Subject 102 - Gender is what defines feminine and masculine, but I believe that this is a social construction. Since we are small, we are led to follow one of the sides and this is given by the sex we are born with.
	Subject 124 - Gender is the definition that is given by society of what is correct according to it by man and woman.
	Subject 126 - It is the definition that society imposes according to what it thinks is correct about men and women.

Source: Research data

**Legend:** The chart presents the third category identified representative of the conceptions of gender of the participants about the concept of gender, entitled Gender close to its classical academic functionalist conception, along with the indicators extracted from the answers that generated this category. The category was formed from the indicators of 37 of the 109 subjects who answered question number 03 of the questionnaire, which concerned 33.94% of this sample.

According to Tânia Suely Antonelli Marcelino Brabo (2015, p. 111), Feminism can be characterized as both “[...] a social movement, with an ideology of women's liberation, and a critical theory of sexism (gender discrimination based on the ideology of women's inferiority), of the androcentric worldview and of male domination”. In the early 1970s, feminist-oriented academic studies were being institutionalized in universities on a global scale, along with the conceptual establishment of a category that distinguished *nature* from *culture*, aspects of women's and men's lives and bodies of biological origin as opposed to aspects of social origin, respective to the domains of biological sex and – what came to be called – *gender*. As shown in Chart 3, the understanding about this distinction is evident in the arguments of subjects 65 and 102.

The concept of gender established there referred to the social constructions regarding *being a woman* and *being a man*, culturally and historically agreed upon, based on the sexual differences between women and men, which polarized human identities in an impassible binarism and enabled the diffusion of biological determinism, even coated by the modern scientific discourse, which naturalized these social constructions. With origins in the Anthropology of the 1930s and 1940s, however, with its central idea erected in Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 work, *The Second Sex*: “No one is born a woman, one becomes a woman [...]” (BEAUVOIR, 2016, p. 11), gender was adhered to by the theorizations of and by the Feminist Movement, in the most varied theoretical and political strands that coexist (Liberal Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Post-Structuralist Feminism, etc.), in their investigations.

Supposedly neutral, scientific discourses that tried to naturalize inequalities between women and men were denounced by feminist investigations, which began to use gender to do so. Costa and Ribeiro (2011, p. 479) point out that this conception of gender “[...] contradicts conceptions such as ‘gift’ and ‘essence’, since it denies the innatism of characteristics attributed to men and women and resorts to

social and historical processes to explain the constitution of male and female genders”, opposing, therefore, to the biologizing conception represented by the previous category.

Over time, the use of gender as a category of analysis of the relations between men and women was adhered to by the most diverse feminist theories, coating it with new concepts, beyond the mere biological/social functionalist distinction, in which sex is a natural basis on which gender is built. Several of these theories, especially those based on post-structuralist and post-modernist currents, with Scott (1995) as an example, pointed out the insufficiency of the functionalist concept of gender, which attributed an uncritical and ahistorical status to biology. From this,

[...] a growing number of feminists sought to understand sex as a theoretical category fully determined by history and culture, that is, subsumed within the category gender. For these feminists, it is the social ways of understanding the difference and similarity between men and women that determine the ways in which the body is apprehended, abandoning completely the idea of a fixed natural basis on which culture would act (CARVALHO, 2011, p. 102).

However, gender, as a concept that adds to sex and does not replace it, referring to the conception represented by this category, is still today the most widespread concept of gender among the concepts used in feminist theorizations, as Carvalho and Rabay (2015) point out, present even in common sense. Therefore, in the title of this category, it is expressed close to the functionalist conception because there was not, at any moment, the interpellation of a certain theory or author of the literature that would provide the research participants with knowledge about this concept, theory and/or author that, then, could have been addressed in their education in the Pedagogy course.

#### **GENDER AS A PERSONAL IDENTITY, CHOSEN OR IDENTIFIED, ORIENTED TO THOSE HISTORICALLY AFFIRMED OR BEYOND THEM**

The category called *Gender as a personal identity, chosen or identified, oriented to those historically affirmed or beyond them*, was constituted from the indicators extracted from the answers of 31 subjects, concerning 28.44% of the total of respondents. The conception of gender it represents refers neither to the biological sex nor to the social constructions made about sexual differences, as the conceptions represented by the two previous categories referred to. The following chart presents the representative category of this new conception of gender.

**Chart 4 – Representative category of the participants' conception of gender identity about the concept of gender**

Category	Indicators
<p><b>4. Gender as a personal identity, chosen or identified, oriented to those historically affirmed or beyond them:</b> gender is defined voluntarily, in the case of a choice; or by one's own understanding of oneself, in the case of an identification, and can be oriented to those</p>	Subject 2 - How people identify themselves and think they are.
	Subject 23 - Gender to me, is the particular orientation of an individual that is not classified by only two nomenclatures - female and male.
	Subject 32 - I understand gender as male and female. Gender to me is that, whether you consider yourself male or female.
	Subject 39 - Gender would be your sexual identity, either in the feminine or masculine characteristics, it would be which one you fit more, so it is a chosen identity.
	Subject 45 - Gender is related to your options of choice.
	Subject 97 - It is when a person identifies as male or female.

historically affirmed identities, woman and man, or beyond them, transcending gender boundaries <b>(31; 28,44%; n=109)</b>	Subject 148 - Gender is the identification of a person's profile, regardless of what body they are born with, but what attracts them the most.
	Subject 152 - Gender is an identification.
	Subject 158 - What the person chooses to be.

Source: Research data

**Legend:** The chart presents the fourth category identified representative of the conceptions of the participants about the concept of gender, entitled *Gender as a personal identity, chosen or identified, oriented to those historically affirmed or beyond*, together with the indicators extracted from the answers that generated this category. The category was formed from the indicators of 31 of the 109 subjects who answered question number 3 of the questionnaire, which concerned 28.44% of this sample.

Based on Chart 4, gender is now conceived as the *process of choice* or *identification* to a certain personal identity, be it respective to the feminine (woman) or masculine (man) genders, as they have been historically affirmed, or transcending them, breaking with this identity binarism by being composed of any attributes, without distinctions, as more contemporarily these “new genders” have been referred to: *non-binary gender, gender fluid*, etc. In a few words, it refers to one of the aspects that gender includes: *gender identity*, which, in a generic conceptualization, is “[...] the way someone feels and presents him/herself to others as a man or a woman, or in some cases, a mixture of both” (Beto de JESUS et al., 2008, p. 35).

As already mentioned, gender, as an identity, was constituted in the opposition female-masculine in many cultures, under the influence of what, in each time and place, was agreed upon about the roles to be played by all those who make up the social environment. Taking the Western culture as an example, the gender assignment, of a previously established identity, starts with the identification of the baby’s sex, sometimes still in the mother’s belly, with the preparation of the pink layette for girls and blue for boys, later on determining which toys, clothes, and activities they should play with, “[...] they with toy cars, dinosaurs and soldiers, preparing and assimilating themselves to autonomy, leadership and aggressiveness; they with miniature household utensils, dolls and ponies, adjusting themselves to the domestic and resigned sphere, to ‘nature’, simulating motherhood” (SILVA; BRABO, 2016, p. 133).

Innatist theories have attempted to *essentialize* these identities, using the biological determinism of scientific discourse to do so. Unlike the biological conception of gender brought earlier, in which gender is synonymous with sex, these theories try to prove that one (sex) determines the other (gender). At this point, one can see the theoretical profusion and heterogeneity of the Gender Studies field, which goes beyond the feminist-oriented literature. Some of these theories come from fields such as Neuroscience, Biology and Psychology (Fernando Luiz CARDOSO, 2008; Joanalira Corpes MAGALHÃES; Paula Regina Costa RIBEIRO, 2009).

Therefore, the identification to a certain identity, as assumed in the arguments of subjects 2, 32, 97 and 152, is an innate process, without the participation of the individual, and most of these theories still point out that if the identified gender is not in accordance with the feminine or masculine as historically affirmed, it is a *deviation*, because they are *naturally* inconceivable. There are fewer conservative approaches to working with these theories (Joan SCOTT, 1995; Lise ELIOT, 2013), including openly feminist ones, but essentialist discourses stemming from them, such as this one, survive to this day.

Empiricist theories, however, came to counter them and, curiously, first coming from the same biological areas mentioned above. Of these, those that provided the functionalist concept of gender, by North American physicians and psychologists, such as John Money and Robert Stoller, stand out. This concept, as discussed earlier, in which gender is built upon sex, was then uncritically appropriated by feminists in the 1970s. However, as also discussed above, with the feminist theorizations, especially the post-structuralist ones, that identities “are not given or finished at a given moment, [...] are unstable and, therefore, subject to transformation” (LOURO, 1997, p. 27), placing sex on the cusp of culture, another

concept of gender was developed, although it did not appear among the conceptions of gender in our research sample.

This concept, now developed in a body of theorizations called Queer Theory, treats gender not as a phenomenon that exists within individuals, ready to be discovered and measured by scientists:

Rather, gender is an agreement that exists in social interactions: it is precisely what we agree it is. [...] both men and women ultimately accept the gender distinctions that are visible at the structural level and that are established at the interpersonal level [...] by assuming for themselves the behavioral traits and roles that are normative for people of their sex in their culture (NOGUEIRA, 2017, p. 103).

Even if this concept appears certain similarity with the arguments of subjects 39, 45, and 152, about identity assumption not being innate, we are inclined to infer that this occurs because they understand female and male identities as the only possibilities of existence, therefore, for these subjects, the non-obedience to gender norms is conscious, a simple choice for “rebellion”, since they didn’t have an argumentation elaborated enough to support the understanding of this concept, coming from the post-structuralist and queer Gender Studies, so complex and difficult to grasp, even for scholars.

## GENDER ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL DESIRE

The last of the identified categories, called *Gender associated with sexual desire*, was constituted through the indicators of the answers of 15 subjects, equivalent to 13.76% of the total respondents. In this conception, as also identified Kelly da Silva (2015, p. 86) in another context, two respective aspects are unduly related to two themes, “[...] gender and sexuality”, which, in fact, are relational, however, in the way they are brought, “there seems to be a confusion between these concepts”, as shown in the following chart.

**Chart 5 – Representative category to the conception of gender associated to the sexual desire of the participants about the concept of gender**

Category	Indicators
<b>5. Gender associated with sexual desire:</b> gender is confused with sexuality, there is not even a minimal distinction between gender identity and sexual orientation, both are treated as synonyms, the classification of sexual desire is added among the historically affirmed <b>genders (15; 13,76%; n=109)</b>	Subject 9 - I understand it to be sexuality, male, female, and their sexual options.
	Subject 46 - Gender is the sexual option chosen by someone.
	Subject 62 - Something connected to sexuality.
	Subject 68 - For me, sexual gender refers to the masculine and feminine, but there are several people who have other gender options, such as homosexuals, bisexuals.
	Subject 127 - It is the sexual option of each person (man, woman, gay...).
	Subject 129 - It is when there is more than one opinion, there is not only the feminine and masculine, there is the heterosexual, homosexual and others, but that are not understood by society yet.

Source: Research data



**Legend:** The chart presents the fifth category identified representative of the conceptions of gender of the participants about the concept of gender, entitled Gender associated with sexual desire, along with the indicators extracted from the answers that generated this category. The category was formed from the indicators of 15 of the 109 subjects who answered question number 3 of the questionnaire, which concerned 13.76% of this sample.

Based on Chart 5, it was verified that gender and sexuality, being the aspects of *gender identity* and *sexual orientation* more specifically, are treated as synonyms, as indicated by the arguments of subjects 68 and 127, or are improperly associated in several ways. One of them, of conceptual inversion, exemplified by subjects 9, 68 and 129, occurs when referring to the genders, female and male, as sexual orientations (appearing even under the nomenclature of *option*, understanding sexual desire as a voluntary act, as addressed by the previous conception regarding gender) and the sexual orientations, hetero and homosexuality, as genders. Another confusion, present in the arguments of subjects 46 and 62, relates gender exclusively to sexuality, without any appeal to what, in fact, gender may represent (e.g., classification, gender relations, gender identity, etc.).

According to Beatriz Accioly Lins, Bernardo Fonseca Machado, and Michele Escoura (2016, p. 69-70), what is called the gender matrix reigns culturally, that is, the association of *body, gender identity, desires, and sexual practices*, expecting the following consistency between these aspects: “we think that a person who was born with a penis (body), for example, will automatically behave like a man (gender identity), will always feel affectionately and sexually attracted to women (desire) and will only maintain sexual relations with them (sexual practices)”. The public of sexual and gender diversity, however, attests that many other combinations are possible among the aspects that make up this matrix.

Thus, gender and sexuality are related as two dimensions of human identity, which intersect as markers of difference, yet are clearly distinguished. Taking the public of diversity as an example, “transvestites and transsexuals are people whose gender identity differs from that expected for their body. This does not mean that they are homosexuals, because gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same thing” (LINS; MACHADO; ESCOURA, 2016, p. 76). This public, which transgresses the aforementioned matrix, whose consolidation was responsible for the confusion that resulted in the present representative category, is focused by *Queer* Theory, having its transgression as an object of study.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, we tried to present partial results of a concluded research, obtained with the application of a questionnaire. With a fruitful review of the concept of gender from the conceptions of a sample of undergraduate students in Pedagogy in the context of public higher education in São Paulo, the conceptions of gender identified, divided into five representative categories of these conceptions, were well distributed among the participants, without significant prevalence among them, although the first and last conceptions did not exceed 20% while the three remaining exceeded a little more than 30%. It is relevant to point out that half of the participants were in the first year of the course and the other half in the last year, and the formation of the five conceptions counted with answers from subjects from both years, beginners and graduates.

Based on the literature and official documents consulted and cited above (the PNEDH and the DNEDH), in the research we found that the training of undergraduate students is below what is expected, as Ribeiro (2011) and Dinis and Cavalcanti (2008) also found within the proposal of their research. Considering that the DNEDH standardize and regulate the work in undergraduate courses, as well as the PNEDH that serve as a parameter to them, it is expected that, in HRE, one promotes “ethical, critical and political education”:

The first refers to the formation of attitudes guided by humanizing values, such as the dignity of the person [...]. Critical training refers to the exercise of reflective judgments [...] promoting institutional practices consistent with Human Rights. Political formation must be based on an

emancipating and transforming perspective of the subjects of rights. Under this perspective it will promote the empowerment of groups and individuals, situated at the margins of decision-making processes and the construction of rights (BRAZIL, 2012, p. 8-9).

But for this training to be provided, teachers, who will participate in this training, need to have more elaborate and emancipatory conceptions on the themes, since, and as the research assumed in dialogue with its hermeneutic referential, the conceptions of these professionals are the ones that will guide their actions in school, in direct and daily contact with diversity. Therefore, the more their conception about gender is constituted by scientific knowledge with an emancipatory project, such as the feminist one, the more chances their performance originating from this conception, the action that they will perform at school, has in being satisfactory in the treatment of sexual and gender diversity and in the development of a work that approaches the theme.

However, regarding what was exposed in this article, we observed that the gender conceptions of these subjects do not support them in their future performance with the gender diversity at school or in the development of a work that approaches the theme. We infer that the participants do not have a formation in gender based on scientific knowledge coming from the productions of feminist gender literature, with the exception of those who understand gender in the identity and functionalist perspectives, but that show themselves in fragile notions and without the evocation of a certain theory or author of the literature.

The feminist gender literature consulted corresponded, above all, to the authors presented in the discussion of the functionalist conception of gender, as well as other authors also cited throughout the article, which “in their multiple theoretical perspectives, but that have in common the political character of equality, can constitute a productive reference and be adopted as a compass in discussions about genders” (FURLANI, 2016a, p. 40). As seen, however, the conceptions evidenced required grounding in other non-feminist literature in the study of gender, showing that most subjects have conceptions with little potential for the contemplation of the referred legally supported education project. More conservative conceptions, or at least little potential, about gender were also found by Costa and Ribeiro (2011) and Dinis and Cavalcanti (2008) in their respective samples of undergraduate students in Pedagogy.

We verified that our research was the first one carried out in the Pedagogy course in question that sought to investigate the training offered there about the themes of gender and sexualities, which is very worrisome, since the course has been in force for over 60 years. Therefore, the diagnosis reported here that we pioneered on the education of the students of this specific course proved to be not only pertinent but also necessary for future investigations, especially interventional ones, since any intervention in a certain reality should start from something tangible, from a diagnosis that one knows or that one should try to have of the reality to be transformed.

Thus, a research program, which began with the research concluded here, continues with a next research<sup>10</sup>, currently in progress, in which we hope to obtain greater contributions about the state of Higher Education training and clues on how to improve it, analyzing, now, the training of the psychologist together with the training of the pedagogue regarding the themes of gender and sexuality, and also ethics. It is worth mentioning that in this ongoing research, the curricular variable of the participating undergraduate courses is also considered, as well as other general documents, such as the *National Curricular Guidelines for the undergraduate course in Pedagogy* (BRASIL, 2006), which was not the object of analysis of the previous research (which focused only on the official documents of HRE).

The University has part of the responsibility in the production of the conceptions of gender of its students. It is now up to us to analyze to what extent it itself does not produce and reproduce these

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conceptions and question if its curriculum and Political-Pedagogical Project makes possible what the relevant official documents guide and stipulate.

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