PERCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY STANDARDS AMONG CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The hegemonic beauty pattern, which circulates throughout society, affects people's identity. However, studies on the subject revolve around adults. Thus, it is necessary to investigate children's perceptions of beauty standards, emphasizing their practices and speech. A qualitative and exploratory research was conducted with 50 children (4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 years), using the Clinical Method (Jean Piaget), which allows a thorough investigation. Participants had asked to draw, view photographs and answer questions related to beauty standards. It has been noted that children have their own ideas about beauty and ugliness and that they change these perceptions according to age. It was observed that cultural patterns and practices have great influence on children, which are affected by the media, building their discourses through experiences and learning, both inside the family and school.

Keywords: Beauty standard; child perception; Piagetian clinical method.

Percepciones de niños sobre el patrón de belleza

RESUMEN

Hay un patrón de belleza hegemónico que circula por la sociedad, afectando la identidad de las personas. Sin embargo, los estudios sobre el tema giran alrededor de los adultos. Con eso, es necesario investigar las percepciones de los niños acerca de los patrones de belleza, enfatizando sus prácticas y hablas. Se realizó una investigación cualitativa y exploratoria con 50 niños (4, 6, 8, 10 y 12 años), se utilizó o Método Clínico (Jean Piaget), el cual permite una investigación profundizada. Se solicitó a los participantes a hacer un dibujo, mirar fotografías y contestar a cuestiones relacionadas a patrones de belleza. Se percibió que los niños tienen ideas propias sobre la belleza y la fealdad y que cambian esas percepciones de acuerdo con la edad. Se observó que los patrones y prácticas culturales tienen gran influencia sobre los niños, los cuales son afectadas por las medias, construyendo sus discursos por intermedio de vivencias y aprendizajes, de la familia y de la escuela.

Palabras clave: Patrón de belleza; percepción infantil; método clínico piagetiano.

Percepções de crianças sobre padrões de beleza

RESUMO

Há um padrão de beleza hegemônico que circula pela sociedade, afetando a identidade das pessoas. Entretanto, os estudos sobre o tema giram em torno dos adultos. Com isso, é necessário investigar as percepções das crianças acerca dos padrões de beleza, enfatizando suas práticas e falas. Foi realizada uma pesquisa qualitativa e exploratória com 50 crianças (4, 6, 8, 10 e 12 anos), utilizando-se do Método Clínico (Jean Piaget), o qual permite uma investigação profunda. Os participantes foram solicitados a fazer um desenho, ver fotografias e responder a questões relacionadas a padrões de beleza. Notou-se que as crianças têm ideias próprias sobre a beleza e a feiura e que alteram essas percepções de acordo com a idade. Observou-se que os padrões e práticas culturais têm grande influência sobre as crianças, as quais são afetadas pelas mídias, construindo seus discursos através de vivências e aprendizados, tanto da família quanto da escola.

Palavras-chave: beleza; percepção; método clínico.

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INTRODUCTION

Studies show that the ideal standard of beauty considered by people is thinness, youth and proportionality (Carvalho & Serpa, 2014; Freitas, Lima, Costa, & Lucena Filho, 2010; Kirchof & Bonin, 2013; Nascimento, Prochno, & Silva , 2012; Nicolino, 2012; Paixão & Lopes, 2014; Secchi, Camargo, & Bertoldo, 2009; Silva, 2012). The beauty standards circulate through society in different ways, whether through the media (soap operas, advertisements, magazines, films), family or institutional coexistence, beautification practices, gender relations, toys and literary stories, strongly contributing to the construction of bodies and identities of the subjects (Cechin & Silva, 2012; Hall, 2000; Louro, 2000).

These patterns are not something simple, natural or eternal, they are constructed culturally and historically, changing according to culture and being reaffirmed by the media, with strong market interest (Carvalho & Serpa, 2014; Cechin & Silva, 2012; Freitas et al., 2010; Nascimento et al., 2012; Simili & Souza, 2015; Wolf, 1992) and this does not only affect adults. The overvaluation of beauty by the media greatly affects children, especially women (Carvalho & Serpa, 2014; Cechin & Silva, 2012; Kirchof & Bonin, 2013; Roveri & Soares, 2011; Silveira Netto, Brei, & Flores-Pereira, 2010; Simili and Souza, 2015; Xavier Filha, 2016), imposing desires in children and characterizing them as prospective consumers.

However, most studies about beauty and consumption are focused on adults, especially women (Cruz, 2015; Freitas et al., 2010; Martins, 2016; Nascimento et al., 2012; Paixão & Lopes, 2014; Secchi, Camargo, & Bertoldo, 2009; Silva, 2012; Souza, Oliveira, Nascimento, & Carvalho, 2013; Wolf, 1992) - only one article focuses on men (Fontes, Borelli, & Casotti, 2012). Even studies that highlight children or children's cultures (Assunção, Assis, & Campos, 2012; Carvalho & Serpa, 2014; Kirchof & Bonin, 2013; Silveira Netto et al., 2010; Roveri & Soares, 2011; Simili & Souza, 2015), bring an adult discourse, highlighting the role of the media in the formation of the subjects. Only Xavier Filha (2016) highlights children's perceptions. In other words, adults, in most texts, are talking about and for children.

In view of this, this study analyzes children's perceptions of beauty standards, emphasizing how these standards influence their lives and how they internalize according to age. In addition, it will be highlighted to what extent the standards of beauty inserted in the media shape the imagination and speech of these children. It is believed that, despite the influence of the media, there is a children's culture with its own ideas about beauty standards, in which children are active subjects, but with different perceptions according to

age - the child as an epistemic subject, who produces knowledge (Delval, 2002). It is also assumed that the older the child and the more inserted into the culture, the more the beauty standards influence him/her.

Therefore, the discussion of this theme is fundamental for education, considering that, based on investigations in this area, new intervention methods may be created, aiming at strengthening autonomous children's identities, with greater awareness when consuming products intended for beautification.

METHODOLOGY
Type of research

In order to investigate the children's perception of beauty standards, a qualitative and exploratory cross-sectional research was chosen, in view of allowing the understanding of the participants' knowledge and practices, considering their complexity within a context, in addition to aim to discover the new empirically (Flick, 2004). In other words, qualitative research allows subjectivity to be present, as it explores the ideas of the studied subjects.

In view of this, there was the use of the clinical method, in which there is constant intervention on the part of the interviewer and the use of counter-suggestions: "… it is about presenting the subject with a different explanation or contrary to his / her to see if it persists in it, which could reveal that his conviction is strong and not the product of a suggestion on our part"(Delval, 2002, p. 146). That is, counter-suggestions lead participants to reflect.

In the Clinical Method there are basic questions common to all subjects, however they are expanded according to the respondents' answers, for better interpretation - the answers guide the course of the interview (Delval, 2002). In addition, the clinical method investigates "… how children think, perceive, act and feel, which seeks to discover what is not evident in what the subjects do or say, what is behind the appearance of their conduct, whether in actions or words "(Delval, 2002, p. 67).

Study context and participants

The clinical method allows evolutionary studies to be carried out, that is, "… to find differences in the ideas, representations and explanations of reality presented by subjects of different ages." (Delval, 2002, p. 101). Thus, children of four, six, eight, ten and twelve years were chosen, to be completed in 2017, in which, for each age, there are five girls and five boys, totaling 50 children.

The division of children into two genders was made with the aim of investigating whether female children are the most affected by the overvaluation of beauty, as indicated by the literature about the subject (Carvalho & Serpa, 2014; Cechin & Silva, 2012; Kirchof & Bonin,

2013; Roveri & Soares, 2011; Silveira Netto, Brei, & Flores-Pereira, 2010; Simili & Souza, 2015; Xavier Filha, 2016). In view of the large number of subjects surveyed, the school proved to be the most convenient place, in addition to the fact that children are already familiar with interacting with several adults (Delval, 2002).

After the authorization of the Department of Education, the school and those responsible for the interviewees, the choice of subjects occurred at random and it was necessary to explain that questions would be asked, which are not related to the school, but that we were interested in finding out what think. It is worth mentioning that all interviews took place in a public institution in the city of Curitiba.

Data collection and analysis instruments and procedures

Observations, fieldwork records and semi-structured interviews common to all subjects were made, which follow the respondents' answers, asking new questions. In addition, resources such as photographs and drawings were used, aiming to investigate the children's perception in different ways. In order not to induce the studied subjects, they were asked to draw a beautiful person before viewing the photos, using the Clinical Method.

The photographs were chosen carefully, trying not to induce the respondents' answers and not reflect the researcher's view. In view of the difficulty of finding photographs with the same characteristics for all ages, two sets were made, one for the ages of 4, 6 and 8, and the other for the ages of 10 and 12 years. Each set contained 10 photos, five of girls and five of boys. All the subjects in the photographs are smiling and wearing simple clothes, so the dress is not the focus of attention. In addition, the scenario of the photographs is neutral.

The children / adolescents in the photographs had the following characteristics: 1) overweight; 2) blond with light eyes; 3) with prescription glasses; 4) Afro-descendant; and 5) underweight. It is worth mentioning that in photographs "2", the girls had short hair and the boys long hair. The choice of these different characteristics of the photos aimed at deepening the children's view of what beauty means, in addition to drawing.

For data analysis, observations were made during the interview transcripts, in order to complement the subjects' responses. However, considering that there is a diversity of responses, it was necessary to establish categories, considering that "We need to capture the meaning of the explanations they provide us, the elements on which they rely to present them and how they conceive the functioning of that portion reality" (Delval, 2002, p. 162).

However, in order to reach these categories, it was necessary to remove as much information from the interview data and determine what really characterizes the child's thinking, but without getting attached to the details. It was essential to develop initial categories of analysis and to identify trends in the subjects' conceptions. After that, together with new readings of the protocols, it was necessary to elaborate new categories, to examine if the conceptions varied with the children's age, if they are evolutionary and if they fit into the initial categories (Delval, 2002). With that, it was necessary to make an analysis of the categories, if they answer the objectives of the work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four years - "I think Melissa is beautiful because she has an Elsa wand"

It was noticed, in the age group of four years, that the children, in the drawings, related a beautiful person to the affection towards that person, drawing close people, such as the mother, the father, a friend or the teacher, justifying their choices: *"Because ... because I love my mother"* (Renata)[1]. When asked about how beautiful she is, seven participants stated that she/he is the person they drew.

The children related ugly people to negative behaviors, such as biting (Renata), fighting (Maria, Luana, Marina), hitting (André, Bruno), talking nonsense (Douglas) and making a mess (Davi). Eight children stated that they learned this from their teacher, brother, father or mother, demonstrating a heteronomous morality, in which moral norms have not yet been elaborated by conscience, being only the learning of duties imposed by adults (La Taille, 1992).

In most of the questions, the four-year-old subjects changed the subject or became very distracted, manifesting "non-important" responses in their repertoire, which are characterized by a lack of interest and distraction (Delval, 2002). In addition, it should be noted that all the children claimed that they found themselves beautiful and said that it is important to be beautiful.

As for the photos, there was no regularity in finding the children beautiful and nine children did not find any ugly photographs. However, after the counter-suggestion, nine children changed their mind about their answer, but they were unable to explain the reason, contradicting their previous statements and demonstrating a lack of conservation of ideas:

> "Did you find any of these girls in the photo more beautiful? *That (5).* Why? *Because I like it.* It's just that these days I talked to a girl your age and she told me that 2 is the most beautiful because she

¹ All names used are fictitious, in order to protect the identity of the participants.

is blonde, what do you think? *Yes, it is the most.* Why? *Because I love it* " (Luana, 4 years old).

Some children accepted one counter-suggestion and refused another, with variation. It is worth mentioning that two participating girls thought that the boy "2" in the photographs was a girl, showing evidence that the male identity is constructed in denial to the female (Fontes et al., 2012). In addition, the four-year-olds made it evident that other people could not find people they thought were beautiful was ugly. In other words, they expressed an egocentric thought: "... our own point of view as absolute, our perspective on things as the only possible ..." (Piaget, 1998, p. 98).

Six years - "People can't call it ugly"

The six-year-olds, like the four-year-olds, related beauty to affection, drawing close people, with the justification that they like the person. Seven of the participants said that a beautiful person is one who plays and does not fight. Three children related to clothes, hair and make-up: *"... when she goes to a party, which is made up, she is very beautiful"* (Luisa). It is noted that there was enlargement in the justifications, since seven participants of four years stated that a beautiful person is who they drew.

For a person to be beautiful, they must put on a beautiful outfit, comb their hair, bathe or apply makeup (Luisa, Mariana, Renan, Benjamin, Raiana, Paulo, Malu and Bruno). Only two children related internal issues, such as being obedient. An ugly person, for eight children, is an angry person and two children related to the clothes: *"With a horrible, torn clothes, with old clothes"* (Luisa). It is worth mentioning that nine children reported that they learned this from their family or teacher, demonstrating a heteronomous morality, like children of four years.

There was no regularity in finding the children in the photos beautiful or ugly, but Mariana claimed that she did not like very dark skin, changing the skin of the girl "4" to *"Moreninho[2] very light"* and Bruno emphasized that he does not like overweight people, leaving thin subjects "1" in the photos. In addition, all participants stated that no one else could think who they thought beautiful was ugly. That is, they still present an egocentric thought as the subjects of four years, in which "... everyone thinks or should think like us" (Piaget, 1998, p. 98). Only four children accepted the counter-suggestions, becoming think what they considered beautiful they became to think they were ugly:

> "Did you find any ugly? *No.* It's just that these days I talked to a girl your age and she said that 1 is ugly because of her belly, what do you think?

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[2] Mulatto.

It is true. Why? Because *I don't like golden hair and fat people very much*" (Mariana, 6 years old).

Others disagreed with the counter-suggestion, staying firm in their position. That is, compared to four-year-olds, six-year-olds have more well-established ideas. However, there was an increase in subjects who thought that boy "2" was a girl.

Eight years - "For people to like you and play with you"

Eight-year-olds, like four and six-year-olds, drew people from their affective circle, such as their mother, grandmother or friend; except a boy who drew a girl he sees at break time and another boy who did not want to draw, because he would not know how to do it. There was an expansion of the justifications of the drawings in relation to the younger groups: affection they feel for the person (Giovana, Raquel, Joana and João), because the person is nice (Vinicius), because of the style (Nina) or they didn't know how to explain (Giovane, Gabriel and Pietra).

When asked about what a beautiful person looks like, four children prioritized inner beauty: "*It is not beautiful by face, by clothes, it is beautiful inside*" (Giovana); two girls linked beauty to external factors: "... *makeup like this, with new clothes, beautiful clothes*"(Raquel) and four children were unable to explain. According to the participants, a person can be beautiful by putting on beautiful clothes (Giovana, Pietra, Raquel, Nina and João), taking care of the body (Gabriel and Joana), being a good person (Jean and Vinicius) or not being able to answer (Giovane). In contrast to the previous groups, the eight-year-old children started to relate beauty to non-visible aspects of people.

In the children's perception, an ugly person is one who wears torn clothes and does not take care of his hair (Giovana, Pietra, Raquel and João), is impolite (Jean, Joana, Vinicius and Gabriel); two children did not know how to answer (Giovane and Nina). Seven children claimed that no one teaches what it is to be ugly or beautiful and the rest thought it was the teacher or the parents, demonstrating a transition from heteronomous to autonomous morals. In addition, seven stated that it is important to be beautiful, highlighting social relationships: "*Because if not, others are cursing you* "(Nina)," *For people to like you and play with you* "(Vinicius).

As for the photos, there was no consensus on thinking the children ugly or beautiful or how they looked that way, in which explanations varied. However, three children judged the photos ugly, based on some characteristics: "*Because the hair is all amazed*" (Giovana, about the girl "4") and "*Because I don't like a black person*" (João). It is worth mentioning that three children pointed out that boy "5" was very thin and

that two girls mistook boy "2" for a girl, as occurred in the groups of four and six years old: *"Wow, long hair? Much like a girl"*(Giovana) and*" Because she has hair like a girl!"* (Joana).

When asked if someone else might think the person they thought was beautiful was ugly, the participants were divided: five said it would be possible and five said it would be impossible. Thus, it is assumed that eight-year-old children are in a transition, abandoning the self-centered view, characteristic of subjects of four and six years.

Seven children did not accept the researcher's counter-suggestion that another eight-year-old child thought the "1" subjects in the photos to be ugly due to their body size: *"Because he is wrong. Everyone is in their own way"* (Giovane), *"Because of the fat, thin, more or less, very strong guy… it doesn't matter "*(Gabriel)," *Because this is bullying "*(Nina). It is important to emphasize that the subjects of this age were more attentive to stereotypes, compared to the younger subjects.

Besides, it is important to emphasize that two girls spoke explicitly about bullying, claiming that it occurs at school and that it affects people: *"No, when I arrived at school everyone called me chubby because I was. Then, when I was on vacation, I lost about 5 kilos"*(Giovana).

Ten years - "Because as I said, everyone has their own taste"

All ten-year-old participants drew women from the social circle, except two who did not want to draw. Their justifications were varied: the person is an inspiration (Andressa), a friend (Gustavo) or by the way of dressing (Mayara). According to the participants, a beautiful person is a simple person (Andressa), intelligent and polite (Breno), respectful (Beatriz), cool (Hugo), with style and posture (Kaique), in fashion (Felipe), similar to the responses of the eight-year-old subjects.

When asked what a person has to do to look beautiful, they stated that they do not need to do anything (Andressa and Gustavo); get dressed the way he/she likes (Breno, Kaique and Lorena); with beautiful clothes (Felipe and Hugo); be nice (Beatriz); taking care of herself/himself (Soraia) and the person being herself/himself (Mayara). According to the children, people learn to look beautiful at home, with their family (Breno, Beatriz and Soraia); looking in the mirror (Mayara); on the internet (Hugo) and becoming fashionable (Felipe). According to Felipe, people learn to stay in fashion by watching television, agreeing with this, because *"... I like to be tidy and beautiful"* (Felipe). In other words, the media creates identifications, desires, attitudes and fantasies (Nascimento et al., 2012).

An ugly person, in turn, is a person without a tooth (Gustavo); messed up and stinky (Felipe); who smokes,

because he/she ages very quickly (Mayara); who does not take care of the skin and hair (Soraia) or the attitude (Kaique, Beatriz and Hugo). For a person to look ugly, they must dress up badly (Felipe and Kaique); speak ill of people (Beatriz); not taking care of herself/himself (Soraia and Hugo); imitate a person and do a lot of plastic surgery (Mayara) or did not know how to explain (Gustavo). It is worth mentioning that three children (Andressa, Breno and Lorena) stated that there is no ugly person - *"For me ugly people don't exist, people who do ugly things exist"* (Breno) and *"Because everyone is beautiful, in their own way"* (Lorena). It is noted that the subjects of this age group, in relation to the previous groups, consider more aspects to designate what is ugly or beautiful, demonstrating an expansion of their ideas and perspectives.

Eight children of this age group assured that no one teaches what it is to be ugly or beautiful, resembling eight-year-old subjects. However, two participants stated that they learn from their parents (Kaique) and their teacher (Beatriz) the sense of inner beauty, of not doing wrong things. Compared to eight-year-olds, there was a decrease in finding it important to be beautiful, in which only three children stated, emphasizing social demands: *"... it is better, otherwise people will be judging"* (Gustavo), *"… if not, other people will not like it and want to be close to you ... Many people like tidy, beautiful people"* (Felipe) and *"Because being beautiful is easier to meet a husband or wife, right "* (Soraia).

It is worth mentioning that these children think these social dynamics are wrong, with strong positions, unlike the subjects of eight years. Participants who stated that it is not important to be beautiful, said that what matters is friendship (Kaique) and being happy (Beatriz). It was noted that four children stated that what other people think affects: *"For example in bullying ... some fat person is suffering from bullying, he suffers, doesn't he? They call him a whale, a sandbag. Then it hurts"* (Lorena).

As for the photos, like the children of the previous age groups, there was no regularity in finding the subjects of the photos beautiful or ugly. It is worth mentioning that none of the ten-year-old participants accepted the counter-suggestions that another ten-year-old child said that person "1" was ugly due to body size or "2" due to hair length, demonstrating that his ideas are well -established *"... people only judge by appearance"* (Gustavo), *"Because, like, I'm not prejudiced, but whoever talks and sees fat like that, it´s wrong ... That's prejudice"* (Kaique), *" I don't think she is ugly because she is fat ... everyone is beautiful in her own way, fat or thin, it doesn't matter "*(Lorena)," *Because even a man can have long hair ... Because it is the way they want to be. And a girl can also have short hair, like a boy"* (Soraia).

It is important to highlight, in relation to the ten-

year-old participants, that "The subjects become much more critical in relation to the existing social order, they make judgments about what is right and what is not" (Delval, 2002, p. 231). In addition, all the children stated that it was possible for someone to think that the person they thought was beautiful was ugly, demonstrating a abandonment of egocentric thinking, at least in this aspect: *"It's just that everyone has their own way to think"* (Breno), *"There are people who have others thoughts "*(Kaique). It is noted, with this, that the subjects of this age group tend to consider more possibilities: "The subject is able to coordinate points of view and to reflect on the possible" (Delval, 2002, p. 231).

12 years old - "A beautiful person, I see the way she is, you know? Not by appearance. Like, her character"

Among the ten participants aged 12, three did not want to draw, claiming that they do not know how to draw (Leandro, Ingrid and Anthony). The children drew someone they thought would be beautiful, but they don't know (Elaine, Fernando, Leila and Carlos); the sister-in-law, for the way of treating others (Paula); herself, because she thinks she is beautiful (Joana) and her mother, because she does well for others and is beautiful (Jonathan), with an increase in the choices.

All subjects, when asked how a beautiful or ugly person is, distinguished internal and external beauty, stating that it is the internal that matters most: *"... there is the person who has beautiful hair, has a beautiful face, this makes beautiful person on the outside, you don't know on the inside"* (Jonathan) and *"Beauty doesn't just come from outside, but from the person's character. Because a beautiful person usually tends to be polite"* (Paula). It is possible to observe, with this, that all the participants of twelve years consider aspects not visible in their judgments: "In the face of a world of appearances, subjects begin to take into account non-visible phenomena, hidden aspects, with which someone cannot just stick to the evidence" (Delval, 2002, p. 229).

For a person to become ugly or beautiful, eight participants related to body care, how to dress well, take care of the skin and have hygiene, similar to the responses of the ten-year-old subjects. This shows the logic of investing in bodies: "... we built them in order to adapt them to the aesthetic, hygienic, moral criteria of the groups to which we belong. The impositions of health, vigor, vitality, youth, beauty, strength are distinctly signified" (Louro, 2000, p. 15). But it is worth mentioning that the participants also emphasized the importance of treating others well, of doing good deeds.

Half of the children said that it is important to be beautiful, highlighting social demands: *"Like, or people say you are ugly, you are judged by words, they take you out of the means of friendship, they do not invite you to work together"* (Joana), *"Nowadays it's being very important, because beautiful people, even at work ... Beautiful people get better jobs" (Jonathan), "Because ... beautiful people have a better chance, kind of... of getting a boyfriend, a job"* (Leila). This demonstrates the perception that appearance is overvalued (Fontes et al., 2012).

Two of the children emphasized that it is important to be beautiful inside, not outside (Anthony and Paula). Children who do not think it is important to be beautiful stressed that *"The only thing that has to be is to be nice to others, to be yourself. And learn that there are no differences among people"* (Elaine). Compared to ten-year-olds, there was an increase in finding it important to be beautiful; however, the responses are similar in content.

The 12-year-old subjects interviewed, like the younger participants, did not have a regularity in finding the pictures beautiful or ugly or if they would change anything in the subjects of the photographs or in themselves. In addition, like the ten-year-old subjects, they still did not accept the counter-suggestions, claiming: *"As I said, I have no prejudice. If you are thin, you are fat, you are ... tall, short, for me there is no prejudice. I see people inside"* (Jonathan), *"... I don't think so, because this is a prejudice. If you think the person fat, she may be the nicest person you will ever meet"* (Fernando*), "I suffer a lot of prejudice because, from my family (starts to cry) ... my aunt suffers a lot of prejudice for being fat ... because people judge the book by its cover, without knowing the person? I don't think that is right"* (Paula), *"Because they think that a beautiful person is just skinny, I mean, doesn't wear glasses ... these types of prejudice, understand*?" (Leila), *"... people are very prejudiced nowadays. As I said, the body doesn't change anything"* (Ingrid).

In addition, like the ten-year-olds, they stated that other people could have other opinions about what is beautiful or ugly, extolling prejudice: *"... there are people who are very prejudiced, just because they are fat or because they are brunette or because they are blond. It depends on the person ..."* (Elaine), *"Because of prejudice. Of the fat person, the blonde person, the person who wears glasses, the black person and the very thin person"* (Fernando*), "First because of prejudice, because she (1) is fat, because this (5) is very thin .. also because of the color of her skin, someone might think this (4) ugly because of the color of her skin, which is a little dark" (*Paula). That is, from the subjects' speeches, it was noted that there is a hegemonic appearance that circulates in society, perceptible to children.

It was noted that the 12-year-old subjects have more elaborate speeches, exemplifying with situations:

"Nowadays if the person sees a person who is black, sometimes they are very discriminated against" (Joana), *"I think this is a lack of respect, because there is a TV show that a person dresses the way they like every day, and they go there and change, throw the person's clothes in the trash and put others"* (Jonathan), *"This one (photo 3) probably, which happens a lot in a TV series, it may have been a bad time for wearing glasses"* (Fernando), *"Like here in 7th A there is a boy with long hair and he is very funny for that, I don't think so right, because this is his personal thing"* (Paula). It is noted, therefore, that the comments on bullying express experiences in the daily lives of the interviewees, in which "Violence, whether psychic or physical, is the greatest expression of the exercise of power" (Azevedo et al., 2012, p. 251).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was possible to verify that the family and the school contribute to the formation of the concepts of "beautiful" and "ugly" in all age groups. From the statements of the subjects of ten and twelve years old, it is noted that the media is present in the formation of these concepts. However, in the formation process of the concepts of "beautiful" and "ugly" there is the activity of the cognitive subject, who processes this information in a unique way.

There was a tendency to increase the complexity of children's perceptions over the years, demonstrating an evolutionary process. The girls, aged six and eight, defend more beautification practices, such as the use of makeup. The older women, aged ten and twelve, in turn, started to empower themselves, arguing that this is not mandatory, essential for all women. The twelve-year-old boys, similarly, defend that people should be as they want. It is worth mentioning, however, that there were no significant differences regarding the gender of the participants in all age groups.

Both boys, girls, four, six and eight years old argued that long hair is a girl thing. Therefore, it was noted that the subjects' ideas evolved and became more elaborated at ten and twelve years old. It is worth mentioning that, in the interviews and data analysis, it was shown how active the children are, producing knowledge and having their own ideas, which change according to the age. Therefore, there is the influence of the family, school and media, and, at the same time, construction of representations about the experiences, in which "... the structure of the organism interacts with the external environment to reconstruct itself and create a new meaning for the subject" (Stoltz, 2008, p. 20).

However, the older the subjects and the more inserted in the culture, the more the cultural beauty standards and their practices influence, in view of the

reports of bullying and prejudice present in the subjects' speeches of eight, ten and twelve years. It is concluded that, although there is no standard in considering the photographs beautiful or ugly, these reports emerged from them, allowing a deepening in the children's perceptions.

It is noted that the practices of bullying occur focused on the bodies of the subjects, suggesting that, in fact, the identity is built from the body, which is completely inserted in social relations. And, although the children of ten and twelve years old bring a critical view on these themes, it was noted that these practices happen at school.

Therefore, the school becomes a privileged place to deal with these issues, problematizing them. It is necessary, according to Silva (2000), a critical and questioning pedagogy, focused on differences, in which pedagogy allows subjects to develop criticisms and questions about the dominant forms of representation of identity and difference. That is, children can thus perceive that standards of beauty are produced, linked to the social relations of power and representation.

It is important to highlight, however, that the study was limited to one context and to a few children, requiring further study with more subjects, to confirm evolutionary regularities. And, from the reports on bullying caused by the appearance of individuals, it is possible to develop research problematizing the role of schools and families in these situations, as well as proposing practices that strengthen the reflection on the identities of children and their ideas about beauty standards, to avoid violent attitudes and develop attitudes that question standards. In this sense, qualified work with differences, at school and in the family, is essential.

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