

International Journal of Human Sciences Research

GAME IN HISTORICAL- CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY: BRAZILIAN STUDIES

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In memoriam

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Abstract: The studies of Vygotsky (2008), Elkonin (2009) and Leontiev (1988), in the historical-cultural perspective, originated a general theory about the game. This work presents results of bibliographic research in Brazilian scientific articles, related to the game, produced between 2010 and 2018, in the areas of psychology and education. The objective was to systematize and analyze the studies available in the Virtual Health Library: "Psicologia Brasil" (BVSPsi); on the CAPES/MEC Journal Portal (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel/Ministry of Education) and on the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO). The keywords were "game"; "cultural-historical psychology" and "Vygotsky". The analysis of the results was of content, of the thematic type. The results showed that most of the research was carried out in preschool education and that they are empirical. It is concluded that in the databases consulted there are few Brazilian studies. The topics are relevant and contribute both to the deepening and to the development of cultural-historical psychology.

Keywords: Game, cultural historical psychology, brazilian studies.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of play was first addressed by Vygotsky in 1933, at the conference held at the Gertsen Institute of Pedagogy, in Leningrad, entitled "Play and its role in the psychic development of children" and was published in 1966. Vygotsky (2008), in his studies, he did not distinguish between game and play, using them as synonyms. The word *igra*, in Russian, means both game and play.

The ideas of Vygotsky (2008), added to the research developed by Elkonin (2009) and Leontiev (1988), in the historical-cultural perspective, originated a general theory about the game, covering its characteristics, its evolution and its importance for the psychic

development. children, topics that will be discussed later.

This study presents the results of a bibliographic research, carried out on Brazilian scientific articles, produced between 2010 and 2018, in the areas of psychology and education. The research aimed to systematize and analyze studies on the game in cultural-historical psychology, made available by national databases.

GAME IN HISTORICAL-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY: CHARACTERISTICS, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPORTANCE

For Vygotsky (2008), the game can be analyzed from the point of view of satisfying needs, imagination, imitation and rules. The game fulfills the child's needs related to the affective aspect. Over the course of a child's development, play changes because there are marked changes in motivations, tendencies, and incentives to play. At preschool age, specific needs and impulses arise that cannot be satisfied immediately. To resolve the tension generated by waiting, the child gets involved in the game. Imagination is the new element that is present in preschool and that is absent in the first year of life (ELKONIN, 2009; LEONTIEV, 1988; VYGOTSKY, 2008).

The creation of an imaginary situation is a defining feature of the game. It is not the result of chance, but a manifestation of the child's advancement in relation to situational constraints. Imagination is the basis of all the creative capacity of the brain. In the child, the creation processes are best expressed in the game, in which context they reproduce their experiences, imitating much of what they saw and heard. An important aspect of the game is that the more the child knows about the world and the relationships between people, the better the imaginary situation created in the game will be. Imitation is another important feature of the game, as it allows the child to

play roles and perform tasks that are assumed to be above their age. Imitation is one of the main paths for the development of higher psychological functions, of the child's cultural development, and is not a simple mechanical transference of behaviors or a mere formation of habits.

Vygotsky (2008), Leontiev (1988) and Elkonin (2009) identify another important feature of the game, the rules, every imaginary situation, in any form of game, contains implicit or explicit rules of behavior, not only those involved in rule games. This idea is demonstrated in the example of the child who plays at being a mother, father, teacher, etc., that is, in the performance of such roles, there are rules that must be followed so that they can be imitated.

With regard to game development, Elkonin (2009) states that, in the first year of life, there is no game. There is direct emotional communication (birth to 1 year), on the part of the child, and then (1 to 3 years) an exploration of objects that will allow exercises for the later development of sensorimotor coordination. The actions that children perform with objects are planned by society to develop skills of feeling, listening and examining.

Gradually, the actions performed by the child become independent of the adult, they expand. Leontiev (1988) explains that the toy appears in the child at preschool age as a result of the need to act in relation to the world of objects and the adult.

This way, imitating the adult, the transition from the game with objects (handling) to the role-playing takes place. The same toys acquire new meanings. At the beginning of this transition—from object play to role play—she still does not have clear relationships, social functions, and the meaning of adult activity. In the role-playing game (3 to 7 years old), she does not stop feeling like a child, but effectively

plays the roles of adults (mother, teacher, etc.), reproducing them according to the concrete relationships that surround her (VYGOTSKY, 2008; LEONTIEV, 1988; ELKONIN, 2009).

Elkonin (2009) explains that the abandonment of egocentric thinking and the transition to a higher level of development thinking would be made possible by the protagonist game, because when the child plays the role of the adult, he abandons his childish postures.

In the game, in addition to the modification that occurs in intellectual activities, there is also a change in the child's position in relation to the world around him. In an individual game, in which she plays, for example, with a doll, there is no need to coordinate her point of view with that of another person. In the starring game, on the contrary, the child needs to combine, cooperate, set the rules with the other, self-control of his conduct occurs. The child needs to leave his point of view, thus passing to a higher level of thought, constituting new intellectual operations.

The appearance of games with explicit rules indicates the end of preschool-type playful activity (LEONTIEV, 1988; VYGOTSKY, 2008). At school age (6 to 12 years), competitive and athletic games predominate, involving relationships and subordination of behavior to certain rules. Another characteristic of the game, in the school phase, is that the child learns to follow rules, giving up his immediate impulses, postponing pleasure and achieving self-control.

The more rigid the rules of the game, the more it will require the child to adapt and regulate his activity, master his behavior to achieve certain purposes. The game with explicit rules is important in the development of the child's personality when it allows self-assessment. In games with explicit rules, the introduction of moral notions happens, since the child would like to do certain actions, but

is limited to complying with the established rules (VYGOTSKY, 2008; LEONTIEV, 1988).

In summary, with regard to the importance of the game for development, in addition to creating ZPD, Vygotsky (2008), Leontiev (1988) and Elkonin (2009) argue that it has the same role as teaching, it is an important factor and source of cognitive and emotional development, as the most important changes in psychic processes occur in it. The game is the guiding activity for the development of the preschool-age child and allows the acquisition of new training, allowing the child's transition to a higher level of development.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The present work was characterized as a bibliographic research (Gil, 2010) of Brazilian articles on the game, based on historical-cultural psychology, produced between 2010 and 2018, in the areas of psychology and education. The articles that were available and were free access were searched in the following databases:

- a) Virtual Health Library — Psychology Brazil (BVSPsi — <https://www.bvs-psi.org.br/>)
- b) Portal of Periodicals of CAPES/MEC (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel/Ministry of Education — <https://www.periodicos.capes.gov.br/>);
- c) Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO— <https://www.scielo.org/>)

The search for scientific articles in the databases was carried out using the keywords “game”, “historical-cultural psychology” and “Vygotsky”. The inclusion criteria of the articles were, in addition to keywords, to address studies by Elkonin and Leontiev, focus on early childhood education, elementary education and intervention in children with learning difficulties. The exclusion factors were the fact that they focused on special needs,

adolescents or adults, physical education, didactic or electronic games. To select the articles, the titles and abstracts were initially read, only the complete works made available by the database. After the selection, the works were analyzed in their entirety and excluded if the article was in more than one database. The research was carried out in CAPES, SciELO and BVSPsi Periodicals. The total number of articles selected and analyzed was 13 articles. The method of analysis of the results used in this study was content, of the thematic type (MINAYO, 1993).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the articles, it was found that most of them describe research developed in early childhood education (16) and elementary school (4). Based on this observation, two categories were structured: early childhood education and elementary education. In the description of the works, the word adopted by the authors regarding game, play and play will be respected.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The articles in this category describe theoretical studies (06) and empirical research (05), described below.

Theoretical studies

The theoretical articles (06) found (AQUINO, 2015; BARROS; FP PINHEIRO, 2012; DUARTE; DERISSO; DUARTE, 2017; MAGALHÃES; MESQUITA, 2014; MARCOLINO; BARROS; MELLO, 2014; ALVES; VIEIRA; FAITÃO, 2010) emphasize the relationship between play and development and learning, arguing that the game develops higher psychological functions (FPS), creates ZPD and, finally, allows the child to appropriate the culture. According to the authors, in order to make this role of the game effective, it is necessary to have intentionality

in education and in the action of the educator, who must select content, actions, guide/direct the teaching and learning process in his planning.

Empirical studies

Five empirical studies were selected and analyzed, which will be described below.

In the study by Toassa (2012), on the understanding of child development in Brazilian society and the way in which consciousness develops in relation to the historical and cultural process, three children participated, selected by age difference (they were between four and five years old). of life, with an approximate difference of six months between them), being two girls and a boy. The data collection instruments used were: interview with the teacher, participant observation, analysis of school activities and three experimental situations. The results were analyzed using the content analysis technique. The author concluded that the teacher, immersed in her work, ignores the political foundations of her practice, reproduces a conservative, religious and clientelistic culture. Children imitate and introject the transmitted vision.

The research reinforces the ideas of Vygotky (2008), Elkonin (2009) and Leontiev (1988) that in the game of roles social relations are given meaning and that subjectivity is constructed. The game can, therefore, help in the process of humanization and construction of a more just society, but for this to occur, it is necessary to think about the role of the teacher in this process.

Dual mediation (SENA; GUIMARÃES, 2016) and knowledge on the part of teachers (BELING; BARBOSA; GONÇALVES, 2018) are important for role-playing to enable the development of the child's psychic processes. The dual mediation of teachers and the sign in the role game and its implications for the

development of preschool-age children was the object of research by Sena and Guimarães (2016). Study participants were 20 children from a preschool II class. The method was action research. For the analysis of the results, empirical observation and interpretative observation were used. The results showed that adequate mediation in children's play favors, diversifies and mobilizes children's subjectivity.

The research by Beling et al (2018) aimed to investigate the perception of teachers about the game played and about its realization in pedagogical practice, in early childhood education classes. The method was qualitative and quantitative, used a semi-structured questionnaire and participated in the research thirty early childhood teachers from public and private schools in three municipalities in the interior of a Brazilian state. They realized that the occurrence of games and games in early childhood education is constant, however they also verified that many of these teachers are unaware of the theory of the protagonist game. It was possible to conclude that carrying out a playful practice is associated with the fact that they work in early childhood education, in which games are a necessary requirement. They conclude that it is important for teachers to include in their pedagogical planning the game played with the objective of developing superior psychological functions and self-control in the conduct of their students.

Finally, children's perception of school (MARQUES; SPERB, 2013) and the importance of the physical space where they play (MARCOLINO; MELLO, 2015) were investigated. In the research on children's conception of school (MARQUES; SPERB, 2013) five dyads of five-year-old children participated, who were part of three play sessions organized with scenes and instructions. A content analysis of the results was performed. These showed that the children

have a good perception about the functioning of the early childhood education institutions they attend, they are able to perceive their coherence and inconsistencies in relation to the pedagogical proposal of the school with the values and cultural expectations related to the institution. They concluded that for children it is important to play, activities, physical space, teachers and rules.

In the study on the space where people play in early childhood education (MARCOLINO; MELLO, 2015), the objective was to verify how a type of spatial arrangement, the scenarios for playing, impacts the game. Twelve play sessions were carried out with a group of seventeen children aged five years from a public school for Early Childhood Education. All sessions were filmed and, as an auxiliary record, after each session, the researcher prepared a descriptive minutes narrating the main events of the day. The results indicated that the scenarios were constituted as support for the imaginary situation, allowing the development of an argument, expanding the actions and relationships of the roles played in the game. The conclusion was that the intentional organization of space alone is not enough. It is important for children to know the activities and human relationships and the content to be interpreted in this space, so that the game is more complex.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In elementary school, two empirical studies were found and selected with children with school complaints.

The article by Pinheiro, Damiani and Silva (2016) was found, and it was researched whether the game with explicit rules could be an instrument for success in students of the 3rd and 4th year of elementary school who had a history of school failure. It had a qualitative approach, based on interventions structured in three moments: initial and final evaluation

with students, mothers and teachers and interventions through “memory”, “face to face” and “checkers” games. The game encounters adopted the principle of double stimulation (VYGOTSKY, 1995). The sample consisted of three students with a history of repetition, two of eleven years old and one of nine years old, two male and one female. The results indicated success in the interventions, as there was the development of FPS and improvement in the students’ school performance, being approved for the next grade. There were also changes in interpersonal relationships and self-care.

Finally, in the study by Nakayama et al. (2016), aiming to understand the mediation process of attention, the authors reapplied Vygotsky’s (2012) investigation entitled “Questions and Answers”. The qualitative research was carried out individually with two children, an eleven-year-old boy and a thirteen-year-old girl, diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The authors concluded that the children had the psychic function of attention preserved and that individual support contributed to learning in general.

Research carried out by Pinheiro, Damiani and Silva (2016) and Nakayama et al. (2016), indicated that mediated play can be a way to help children in their development and learning in elementary school.

There is a consensus in the research developed by Sena and Guimarães, (2016) and by Beling, et al. (2018) in early childhood education, that the game theme must be included in the training of teachers and that they must have continuous support, from planning to the evaluation of experiences. If there is not a well-founded use of the game, there is a risk of losing its pedagogical and developmental potential, making it just a free activity to be performed.

Most of the Brazilian studies, in psychology and education, on the game in cultural-

historical psychology are carried out in early childhood education. Possibly, this emphasis is due to the work developed by Vygotsky (2002, 2008), Leontiev (1988) and Elkonin (2009) who focused their studies and research on this age group.

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this bibliographic research regarding the game in cultural-historical psychology in Brazilian scientific articles, produced between 2010 and 2018, in the areas of psychology and education, it is inferred that there is little production on the topics addressed. The predominance of studies continues to be in the early childhood education stage. Research has advanced in terms of the increase in empirical studies compared to bibliographic ones.

In general, there is research with emphasis on themes related to the understanding of the development of consciousness, the formation of subjectivity, the perception of school, the importance of the physical space where one plays and interventions with children with school complaints. With the teachers, the topics investigated refer to the double stimulation/mediation, to their knowledge and their preparation to work with the game in cultural-historical psychology.

The works analyzed in their conclusions emphasize that the game is a historical-cultural construction that plays an important role in the learning and development of children both in early childhood education and in elementary school. The game is the main activity in the development of the child of preschool age, as it allows the acquisition of new formations that will be the basis for the school age. Through mediated play and enriched activities, imagination, attention, memory and many other functions are developed that will enable the regulation of behavior.

The researches are relevant for the deepening and development of historical-cultural psychology and contribute, both in the theoretical and methodological fields, to the work of professionals who work with children. Also noteworthy is the need for greater dissemination of these researches in the academic environment, during the training of professionals. It is suggested that further studies be carried out with teachers and psychologists, identifying their knowledge and needs, and research such as interventions through games with children with “mismatches” in learning.

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