Group Psychology in Brazil: An Analysis with a Focus on Adolescents from Porto Velho

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Abstract— This scientific article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of group psychology in the Brazilian context, exploring its definition, history, main theories, and group processes. The study emphasizes the contributions of Brazilian authors to the field and investigates the applications of group psychology, with a specific focus on field research conducted with high school adolescents in Porto Velho, Rondônia. The methodology involved a detailed review of national and international literature and data collection through interviews with 236 students. The results of the field research, presented and analyzed, offer valuable insights into the interests, future plans, worldview, sexuality, work, and responsibilities of the adolescents. The discussion integrates the findings of the field research with the theoretical concepts of group psychology, culminating in practical recommendations for teachers working with this population.

I. INTRODUCTION

Group psychology, as a field of study dedicated to understanding human behavior in collective contexts, has an intrinsic relevance for the analysis of social dynamics that shape individuals and communities. In Brazil, the investigation and application of the principles of group psychology offer crucial tools for the interpretation of phenomena that permeate from the educational environment to the organizational, clinical, and community spheres. Understanding the intricate web of relationships that are established in groups is fundamental for professionals who work in various sectors of Brazilian society.

This scientific article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of group psychology, with particular emphasis on the contributions of Brazilian authors and the practical applications of the area. We seek, therefore, to offer an overview that covers the historical evolution of group psychology, its main theories and approaches, the group processes characteristic of the Brazilian context, and the ways in which this knowledge can be applied in different fields.

One of the central focuses of this study is the presentation and discussion of field research conducted with high school adolescents in Porto Velho, Rondônia, aiming to deepen the

understanding of their experiences and perspectives within social groups.

The structure of this article develops from a detailed review of the pertinent literature, which explores the definition and history of group psychology on a global and national scale, the fundamental theories that support the area, and the group processes relevant to the Brazilian context. Following this, we present the methodology used in the field research, detailing the process of data collection and analysis obtained from the adolescents of Porto Velho. The data analysis and tabulation section offers a clear view of the research results, from both the literature review and the field study. The discussion integrates these findings, comparing and contrasting theoretical and empirical perspectives, and connects them to the introductory concepts of group psychology. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main contributions of the study and proposes specific recommendations for teachers who work with groups of school adolescents.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW / STATE OF THE ART

Group Psychology is a fundamental field within Social Psychology, dedicated to the study of the interactions and dynamics that emerge when individuals come together in collective contexts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for various areas, including organizational behavior, education, clinical psychology, and community interventions. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the essential concepts, theories, and research in the field of Group Psychology, with a specific focus on the following topics: definition and history of group psychology, main theories and approaches, group processes, and applications in different areas, especially in the Brazilian context and, subsequently, in the context of the Municipality of Porto Velho, where the Field Research was carried out.

2.1. Definition and History of Group Psychology

The conceptualization of "group" in Social Psychology has evolved over time, reflecting different theoretical perspectives. Initially, a social group was defined as two or more individuals who interact with each other, share similar characteristics, and develop a collective sense of unity. Muzafer Sherif (1966) proposed a more detailed definition, describing the group as a social unit composed of individuals who interact in relation to common goals, with a division of labor, established status relations, accepted norms and values, and sanctions for the fulfillment or violation of these norms. Kurt Lewin, considered one of the founders of modern Social Psychology, introduced Field Theory, which proposes that behavior is a function of the

person and their psychological environment, highlighting the interdependence between group members (Lewin, 1952). In Brazil, the psychologist Silvia Lane offered a critical perspective, proposing the group as a privileged analytical category for understanding the Brazilian social reality, emphasizing the "group process" instead of simply the "group" as a static entity (Lane, 2004).

2.2. Main Theories and Approaches of Group Psychology

Several theories and approaches have been developed to understand group phenomena. The Social Identity Theory, proposed by Henri Tajfel, explains how individuals derive part of their self-concept from belonging to social groups, leading to ingroup favoritism and, at times, outgroup discrimination (Tajfel, 1982). The Realistic Conflict Theory, developed by Muzafer Sherif, demonstrates that hostility between groups arises from competition for limited resources, and that superordinate goals can reduce this conflict (Sherif, 1966). Wilfred Bion, with his Basic Assumption Theory, offered a psychoanalytic perspective on group dynamics, identifying three unconscious assumptions that influence group behavior: dependence, fight-flight, and pairing (Bion, 1961). In Brazil, in addition to Silvia Lane, Aroldo Rodrigues stands out, known for his contributions to Social Psychology, defending an experimental approach and introducing the concept of Social Technology as a way to apply psychology to solve social problems (Rodrigues, 2002).

2.3. Group Processes: Leadership, Communication, Cohesion, and Conflict

The group processes, such as leadership, communication, cohesion, and conflict, manifest themselves in particular ways within Brazilian contexts, influenced by cultural and social nuances. The group development model proposed by Bruce Tuckman (1965) describes five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. In the Brazilian context, studies on civic engagement and leadership in adolescents indicate the importance of the role of young people as agents of change, despite demonstrating a lack of trust in certain political institutions (Afonso et al., 2010). Communication in groups of school adolescents in Brazil has been explored in research that investigates the use of information and communication technologies, parenting practices, and the perception of the school climate (Barros & Colaço, 2012). Cohesion in groups of Brazilian school adolescents is a relevant theme, with studies exploring its relationship with academic performance and psychosocial well-being (Pinheiro et al., 2012). Conflict in groups of school adolescents in Brazil has also been the object of study, especially in relation to issues such as

violence, bullying, and the context of young people in conflict with the law (Afonso et al., 2010).

2.4. Applications of Group Psychology in Different Areas in Brazil

The applications of Group Psychology in Brazil are vast and cover several fields. In education, group psychology has been used in interventions with adolescents in schools, with a focus on topics such as professional future, cyberbullying, sexuality, feminism, and religion (Barros & Colaço, 2012). In the work context, group psychology helps in understanding group dynamics, team formation, performance improvement, increased commitment, and conflict management (Marra & Fleury, 2008). In the clinical and mental health area, group psychotherapy has been applied in public services with psychoanalytic references, seeking to analyze the therapeutic effects from the psychic changes reported by the participants (Bleger, 2001). Community psychology also benefits from group practices, aiming at the mobilization of communities in the search for better living conditions and the strengthening of social support (Pinheiro et al., 2012).

In short, Group Psychology is a dynamic and multifaceted field that offers important contributions to the understanding of human interactions in collective contexts. In Brazil, critical and contextual approaches have enriched the field, providing valuable insights for professional practice and for the promotion of social well-being.

III. METHODOLOGY

The elaboration of this scientific article involved two main stages: a comprehensive literature review and the conduction of field research. The literature review was carried out through consultation with various relevant databases for scientific articles, books, and other academic publications. The main databases consulted were Google Scholar, Scielo, and other platforms for indexing scientific journals.

The keywords used in the searches included terms such as group psychology, group dynamics, group processes, theories of group psychology, history of group psychology, applications of group psychology, adolescents, Brazil, leadership, communication, cohesion, conflict, both in Portuguese and English.

The inclusion criteria for the selection of sources were relevance to the theme of group psychology in the Brazilian context, academic level (prioritizing scientific articles, books, and book chapters), availability of the full text, and adequacy to ABNT standards for citations and references. Sources that did not present scientific rigor or that were not directly related to the topics covered in the article were excluded.

The results are indicated in the Literature Review/State of the Art, which brought up some aspects about the history of Group Psychology, with significant contributions from international authors such as Lewin, Tajfel, Sherif, and Bion, whose fundamental theories shaped the field. In the Brazilian context, authors such as Silvia Lane, Aroldo Rodrigues, and Maria Helena Souza Patto emerged as central figures, each offering unique perspectives on social and group psychology, often adapting or criticizing international theories in light of the Brazilian reality. Lane emphasized the analysis of the group process within a broader social and historical context, while Rodrigues brought a more experimentalist perspective and applied the principles of social psychology to various contexts. Patto, in turn, offered a forceful critique of traditional school psychology, analyzing the relations between psychology, ideology, and the social structure.

3.1 Field Research in Porto Velho, Rondônia

The current field research was conducted in the municipality of Porto Velho, State of Rondônia, in the period of 2023/1 and 2024/1, adopting a semi-structured interview and a predominantly quantitative approach, complemented by qualitative elements. A total of 236 high school students, aged between 15 and 17 years, regularly enrolled in three state schools in the city, participated in this research: Escola Estadual Murilo Braga, Escola Estadual Estudo e Trabalho, and Escola Estadual Castelo Branco. The sample was selected non-probabilistically, for convenience, seeking to cover a diversity of profiles within the student population of the participating schools. The distribution of students by school, sex, and age was as follows:

The field research adopted a predominantly quantitative approach.

Table 1 - Distribution of students by school, sex, and age

SCHOOL	Male (Total)	Female (Total)	15 Yeasr		16 Yeasr		17 Yeasr		Total Alunos
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
E.E. Murilo Braga	40	40	14	13	13	14	13	13	80
E.E. Castelo Branco	39	39	13	13	13	13	13	13	78
E.E. Estudo e Trabalho	39	39	13	13	13	13	13	13	78
Total	**118**	**118**	**40**	**39**	**39**	**40**	**39**	**39**	**236**

The data collection instrument was developed based on the topics of interest defined in the research project. The questions sought information about the adolescents' interests (leisure, culture, etc.), plans for the future (educational, professional), worldview (social, political, environmental issues), sexuality (identity, relationships), work (experiences, expectations), and responsibilities (family, school). Data collection was carried out at the schools, with the authorization of the principals and the free and informed consent of the adolescents and their guardians. The data were tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferential statistics, with the aid of statistical software. The qualitative analysis of the open-ended questionnaire responses was performed using the content analysis technique, seeking to identify recurring themes and meanings attributed by the participants to their experiences and perspectives. All ethical procedures for research involving human beings were observed, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

3.2. Data Analysis and Tabulation

The results of the field research with the 236 adolescents from Porto Velho revealed a diverse panorama of their interests, plans, views, and responsibilities. Initially, the search for information was more general and by broader categories, favoring the emergence of themes whose percentages are shown in the following table:

Table 2: Percentage of Emerging Themes from Group Interviews with Adolescents

EMERGING THEMES	FREQUENCY OF MENTION (%)
Identity and Self-Esteem	84.7%
Relationships with Peers and Friends	78.3%
Future Expectations and Career	65.7%
Family Dynamics and Conflicts	52.5%
School Experiences and Challenges	45.3%
Use of Technology and Social Media	38.1%
Mental Health and Well-Being	30.5%
Personal and Social Values and Beliefs	25.8%

The analysis of the emerging themes seeks to provide an overview of the main concerns and interests of adolescents in Porto Velho, contributing to the understanding of group psychology in this specific context. The themes identified, such as identity and self-esteem, peer relationships, and future expectations, are consistent with findings from other research on adolescence in Brazil. The high frequency of mention of themes such as identity and interpersonal relationships underlines the importance of the peer group and the search for self-affirmation at this stage of life.

Group psychology has several practical applications in different contexts. In the educational field, the understanding of group dynamics can be used to improve student performance, promote inclusion, and manage conflicts in the classroom. Group interventions, such as those described in studies with Brazilian adolescents,

demonstrate the potential of dialogue spaces to address topics such as professional future, cyberbullying, sexuality, and family relationships. The use of focus groups, for example, can be an effective strategy to democratize teaching and empower adolescents, allowing their opinions to be considered relevant.

In the health field, group psychology is widely applied in primary care as a tool for promoting mental health, preventing diseases, and comprehensive care. Support and listening groups, guidance and health education groups, and therapeutic groups are some of the modalities used to meet the specific needs of the population and strengthen social and community bonds. Group psychotherapy, in turn, offers a space for the elaboration of emotional conflicts and the development of social skills, being used in the treatment of various mental health conditions. Studies on the therapeutic effects of psychoanalytic group psychotherapy in public policies demonstrate its potential as an alternative approach in mental health care.

In the organizational and work context, group psychology helps in understanding team dynamics, in the formation of effective work groups, in conflict management, and in increasing employee commitment. The application of group dynamic techniques can facilitate communication, integration, and problem-solving within organizations. Organizational psychology recognizes the importance of group processes for the performance and well-being of workers.

In the community sphere, group psychology is fundamental for the promotion of social development and the empowerment of communities. The use of group techniques, from the perspective of the historical-cultural theory, favors the expansion of the possibilities of abstraction and self-regulation of behavior, from the emergence of zones of proximal development within the group. Community psychology seeks social change through the mobilization of communities in the search for better living conditions, using group dynamic techniques and knowledge of reality for self-reflection and organized joint action.

The emerging themes identified in the field research in Porto Velho, such as concerns with identity, relationships with peers, and future expectations, reflect the importance of the group context in the lives of adolescents. These findings can inform the creation of more effective psychosocial interventions in the school and community environment, aiming to promote the well-being and healthy development of young people. For example, the high frequency of mention of the theme of relationships with peers suggests the relevance of activities that strengthen positive social bonds and address issues such as cyberbullying, which also emerged as a concern in other studies with Brazilian adolescents.

In a second moment, the search for information was more applied, and the data collected were represented in tables and graphs to facilitate visualization and analysis, as exemplified below.

Table 3 – Data from Research with Adolescents in Porto Velho

CATEGORY	INVESTIGATED ASPECT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Interests	Watching movies and series	78%
	Listening to music	75%
	Using social media	72%
	Playing sports	55%
Cultural Activities	Going to the cinema	40%
	Participating in musical events	35%
	Visiting shopping malls	30%
Plans for the future	Entering higher education	85%
	Getting a job	70%
	Starting a family	50%
Intended courses	Health area	30%
	Technology	25%

	Law	15%
Worldview	Concern with violence	80%
	Concern with social inequality	75%
	Concern with the environment	65%
Political Stance	Interest and engagement	40%
	Disinterest	35%
	Indifference	25%
Sexuality	Affectionate relationship	60%
	Identifies as LGBTQIA+	15%
Work and future	Professional experience	40%
	Financial stability	80%
	Personal fulfillment	65%
Responsibilities	School	95%
	Family	70%
	Financial	20%

Table 3 presents the analysis of data collected in the field research with 236 high school adolescents from Porto Velho and reveals a complex and diverse panorama of the interests, values, and perspectives of this age group. The predominant leisure activities include watching movies and series (78%), listening to music (75%), and using social media (72%). In cultural terms, going to the cinema (40%) and attending musical events (35%) also stood out.

The analysis is grouped into 3 graphs representing the data obtained in the research with 236 adolescents from Porto Velho. The information is organized by thematic categories, highlighting the participants' interests, values, and perspectives on different aspects of social, educational, cultural, and affective life.
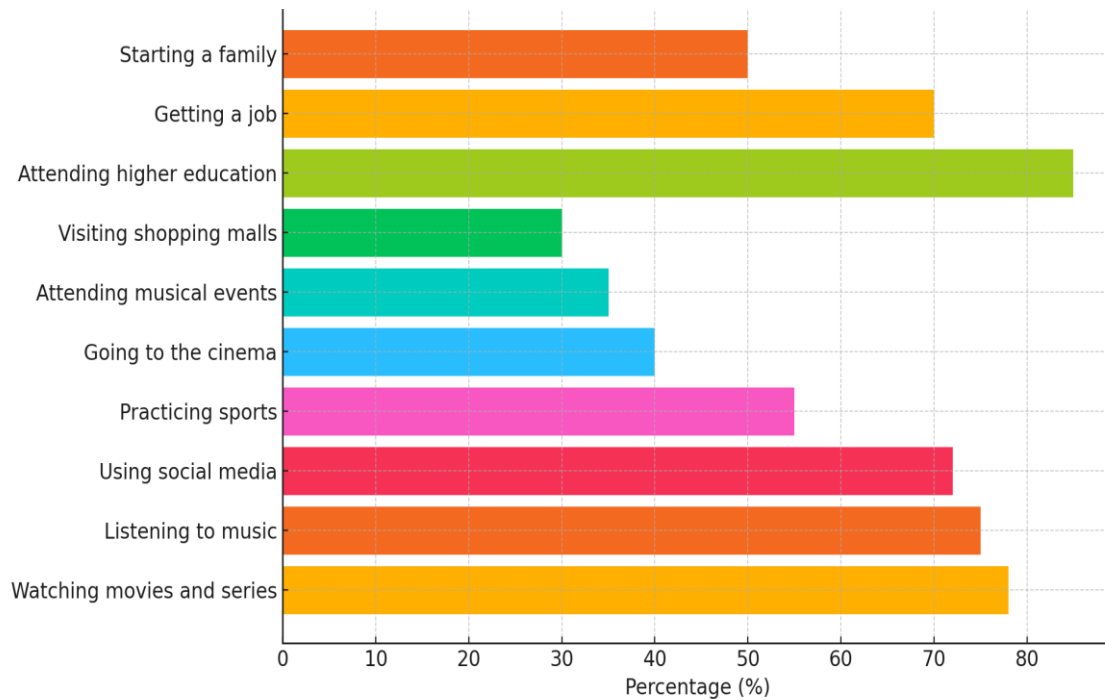
The graphs are thus distributed:

Graph 1 – Interests, Cultural Activities, and Plans for the Future

Graph 2 – Intended Courses, Worldview, and Political Stance

Graph 3 – Sexuality, Work, and Responsibilities

Here they are:

Graph 1 – Interests, Cultural Activities, and Future Plans

Regarding interests, the most cited leisure activities included watching movies and series (78%), listening to music (75%), using social media (72%), and playing sports (55%). In the cultural sphere, going to the cinema (40%) and participating in musical events (35%) were also significant. Regarding plans for the future, the vast majority (85%) expressed the desire to enter higher education, followed by getting a job (70%) and starting a family (50%).
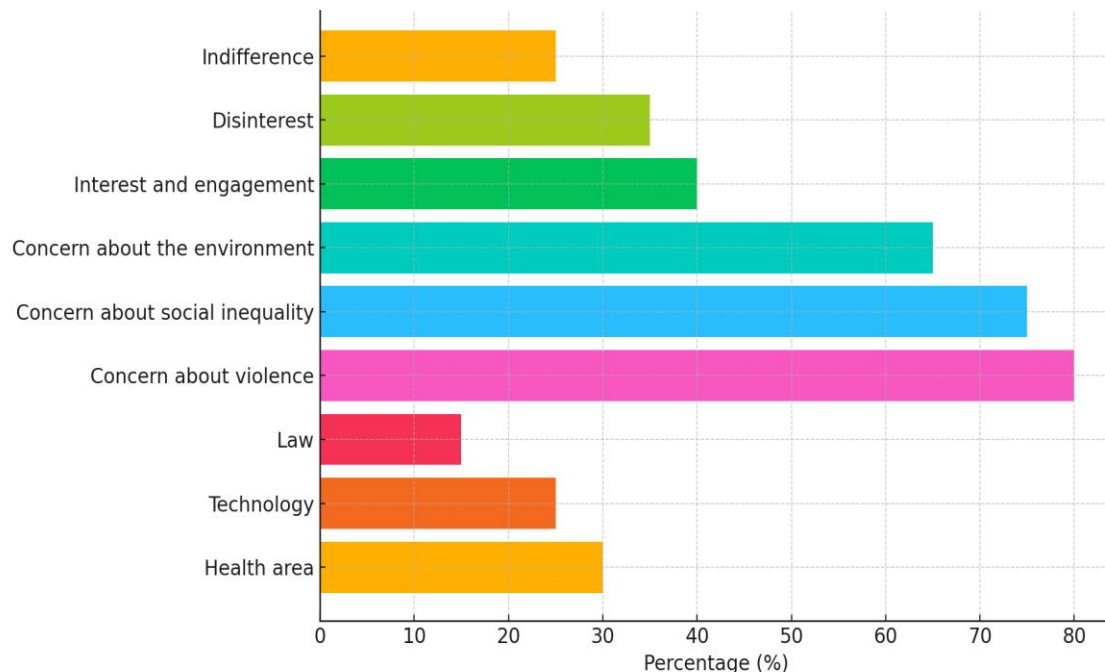
Graph 2 – Intended Courses, Worldview, and Political Positioning

Among the courses of interest, the health area (30%) and technology (25%) stood out. Regarding worldview, there was a strong concern with violence (80%), social inequality (75%), and the environment (65%). In relation to political positioning, 40% showed interest and engagement, 35% disinterest, and 25% indifference.
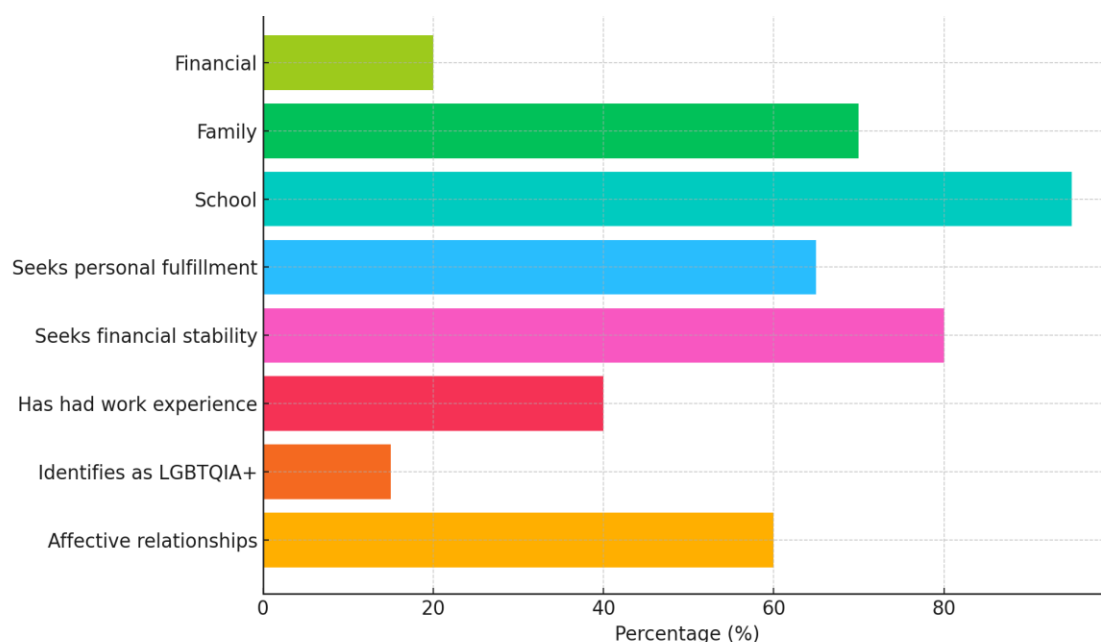
Graph 3 – Sexuality, Work, and Responsibilities

In the field of sexuality, 60% reported having an affectionate relationship, while 15% identified as LGBTQIA+. Regarding work, 40% had professional experience, and the main aspirations were financial stability (80%) and personal fulfillment (65%). In terms of responsibilities, school was mentioned by 95%, family by 70%, and financial by 20%.

IV.   DISCUSSION

The results of the field research with adolescents in Porto Velho reveal a complex and multifaceted scenario, reflecting the diversity of interests, values, and perspectives of this age group. The data highlight the importance of group psychology for understanding the dynamics that shape the lives of young people in this specific context.

The analysis of emerging themes in the group interviews brought to light relevant aspects of the adolescents' social and emotional development. The high frequency of mentions of themes such as identity and self-esteem, relationships with peers, and future expectations is consistent with findings from other studies on adolescence in Brazil and worldwide. The peer group appears as a fundamental space for the construction of identity and the search for self-affirmation, reinforcing the importance of social interactions in this phase of life.

The quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires provided a more detailed view of the adolescents' interests, plans, views, and responsibilities. The predominance of leisure activities such as watching movies and series,

listening to music, and using social media reflects the influence of technology and popular culture in their daily lives. The strong desire to enter higher education indicates a concern with professional future and social mobility, despite the challenges and uncertainties of the job market.

The concerns with violence, social inequality, and the environment reveal a critical and engaged worldview, demonstrating that adolescents are aware of the main problems facing society. The different stances in relation to politics reflect the diversity of opinions and the complexity of the political context in Brazil.

The data on sexuality and affective relationships highlight the importance of this dimension in the lives of adolescents, as well as the growing visibility of LGBTQIA+ identities. The aspirations for financial stability and personal fulfillment in the work context reflect the desire for autonomy and self-realization.

The responsibilities mentioned by the adolescents reveal the centrality of school and family in their lives, as well as the growing awareness of financial obligations. These findings can inform the creation of more effective psychosocial interventions in the school and community environment, aiming to promote the well-being and healthy development of young people.

V.   CONCLUSION

The analysis of group psychology in the Brazilian context, with a specific focus on adolescents from Porto Velho, Rondônia, reveals the complexity and richness of the social

dynamics that shape this age group. The literature review and the field research conducted allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the interests, plans, views, and responsibilities of adolescents, as well as the main challenges and opportunities they face.

The results of the research highlight the importance of group psychology for understanding the behavior and social interactions of adolescents, as well as for the development of effective interventions in the educational, health, and community fields. The peer group appears as a fundamental space for the construction of identity and the search for self-affirmation, reinforcing the need for activities that promote positive social bonds and address issues such as cyberbullying and social exclusion.

The data on the adolescents' interests, plans, views, and responsibilities provide valuable information for teachers, educators, and other professionals who work with this population. The strong desire to enter higher education indicates the importance of providing guidance and support for career planning, as well as promoting access to quality education. The concerns with violence, social inequality, and the environment reveal the need to address these issues in the school context, encouraging critical thinking and civic engagement.

The findings of this research also have implications for public policies aimed at adolescents, highlighting the importance of investing in education, health, and social programs that promote the well-being and healthy development of young people. It is essential to create spaces for dialogue and participation, where adolescents can express their opinions and concerns, and be heard and valued by society.

In short, group psychology offers a valuable theoretical and methodological framework for understanding the complexities of adolescence in the Brazilian context and for promoting positive social change. The results of this research contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area and provide practical guidelines for improving the lives of young people in Porto Velho and beyond.

Recommendations for Teachers Who Work with Groups of School Adolescents:

- Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment: Create a safe and respectful space where all students feel valued and accepted, regardless of their differences.

- Encourage positive social interactions: Promote activities that foster cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect among students, such as group projects, debates, and games.

- Address issues of identity and self-esteem: Provide opportunities for students to explore their identities, develop self-confidence, and strengthen their self-esteem.

- Facilitate career planning: Offer guidance and support for students to explore their interests, skills, and values, and make informed decisions about their future.

- Promote critical thinking and civic engagement: Encourage students to reflect on social issues, express their opinions, and participate actively in community life.

- Address issues of violence and bullying: Implement strategies to prevent and combat violence and bullying in the school environment, promoting a culture of peace and respect.

- Support emotional well-being: Provide resources and support for students to deal with stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges, and promote mental health.

- Use technology responsibly: Integrate technology into the classroom in a meaningful and engaging way, while also addressing issues of digital citizenship and online safety.

- Promote family involvement: Establish effective communication channels with families and involve them in the educational process, creating a collaborative partnership.

- Continuously evaluate and adapt: Reflect on your practice, seek feedback from students and colleagues, and adapt your teaching strategies to meet the evolving needs of your students.

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