


Spirituality and psychology: Converging themes

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ABSTRACT

The theme of spirituality as an object of study and as a component of human life was recognized as relevant to health, be it physical and/or mental. Even though it is a relevant topic, there is a gap in the knowledge of the spirituality of psychology professionals in Brazil and its impact on research and clinical practice. This research aims to analyze the scientific productions about psychology and its relationship with the themes of spirituality. This is a qualitative research through the integrative literature review, the search was carried out on the Portal of Periodicals (CAPES) and the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD) using the descriptors spirituality, psychology and psychological practices, where 9 works were selected, including theses and dissertations, published between the periods of 2012 to 2020. The results were classified according to: objective, methodology and results. Three themes were identified: religiosity and spirituality; professional training and clinical practice. Of the works analyzed, there were 3 theses and 6 dissertations and in relation to the methodology, the two quantitative researches present surveys carried out with psychologists, two works were conducted within specific theoretical approaches: Brazilian gestalt-therapists and cognitive-behavioral therapy. Qualitative research was carried out through interviews with 24 clinical psychologists and 2 students in the process of training. Two studies were integrative reviews and one literature review of national and international articles and TCCs. Regarding the objectives of the research analyzed, the general objectives are related to religiosity and spirituality in the context of clinical practices. The understanding of the concepts of religiosity, spirituality and psychology is the focus of 04 works. The theoretical currents that underlie the research are linked to the objectives of three works, being respectively Gestalt, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Logotherapy/existential psychology, and Analytical Psychology. Psychologists' personal perspective on the topic and its repercussions are addressed in a thesis, while the patients' perspective is explored in a dissertation. It is concluded that it is essential for psychology professionals to take an individualized approach when dealing with spiritual issues. Everyone has their own beliefs and values in this regard, and it is important to respect and consider them during the therapeutic process.

Keywords: Psychology, Spirituality, Psychological practice.

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of spirituality as an object of study and as a component of human life has accompanied man throughout history. Its influences encompass the individual's interpersonal, sociocultural and intrapsychic relationships, expressed in beliefs, values, emotions and behaviors (GERONASSO; MORE, 2015).

In 2013, the Federal Council of Psychology (CFP) published a position on psychology, religion and spirituality and the importance of psychologists integrating these aspects of human life into their work. In this text, the secularity of the State and of the profession is recognized, and emphasizes the notoriety of religion and spirituality in Brazil, taking up the legacies of ancient peoples. In addition, according to this document, it is identified that both religion and spirituality serve as means of understanding the human being, considering their influences on the "maintenance and development of psychosocial health", becoming the basis for a healthy subjectivation process (CONSELHO FEDERAL DE PSICOLOGIA, 2013, p.3).

Objectivity and subjectivity are considered inherent to health work, considering that the object that constitutes it are human beings whose technical interventions are always permeated by interpersonal relationships (SILVA, 2020). Also according to this author, it is in this sense that spirituality is approached to draw attention to the dimension of this theme, since it gives hope for better days.

To understand the theme of spirituality, it is necessary to distinguish it from religion, since they are sometimes equated and even understood as synonyms. Thus, it is worth mentioning that the concept of religion refers to the institutional and doctrinal aspect of a certain form of religious experience. It is defined by certain beliefs and rites referring to the transcendent and understood as means that offer salvation (BOFF, 2006).

Koenig (2012) defines religion as beliefs, practices and rituals that are related to something of the transcendent order – here the name of God or any other entity of different religious denominations can be entered. In addition, the author points out that religions have specific beliefs about life after death and constitute rules for living in a society.

Silva *et al.* (2014) defines spirituality as a belief system that encompasses subjective elements that transmit vitality and meaning to events of human life, which has been embedded in humanity since before its creation. For the authors, it can mobilize Extremely positive energies and initiatives, with potential in the search for meaning, influencing the quality of life.

With regard to spirituality, according to Catré (2016), it is a controversial and wide-ranging subject, which accompanies the history of humanity and is immersed in prejudices and controversies. And in this sense, it is constructed in socio-cultural and historical contexts, structuring and attributing



meaning to values, behaviors, human experiences, and sometimes materializes in the practice of a specific religious creed (PINTO, 2007).

These characteristics of spirituality lead to a growing academic interest in researching this phenomenon due to its implications for people's well-being and quality of life, although it is still little discussed. The relationship between health and religiosity/spirituality has become a promising field of study, at the same time controversial and challenging (MOREIRA-ALMEIDA, 2007). According to Rocha and Monteiro (2017), the concept of spirituality is little addressed in academic discussions and psychotherapeutic practices, even though it is a fundamental component for the comprehensive health care model, which considers the interrelationship of physical, emotional, mental, social, professional, and spiritual well-being. The same authors call attention to the fact that paradigmatic flexibility translates the transformation that the biopsychosocial concept is undergoing. Gradually, it is becoming a "spiritual biopsychosocial" concept, which urgently needs to be incorporated into the psychotherapeutic setting. (ROCHA; MONTEIRO, 2017).

Therefore, from this perspective, Farris (2005) emphasizes that both psychology and spirituality, despite their differences, which use different concepts to describe similar processes of construction and creation of meaning, are not incompatible.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

How is Brazilian scientific production presented in theses and dissertations on psychology and its relationship with spirituality?

SUPPORTING

By observing spirituality in the context of psychology, we infer that this theme is little discussed in this context. As it is considered a new and expanding area of activity, there is a lack of literature on the topics in question (PERES *et al* , 2007; LOUSADA, 2017), enabling the elaboration of a project with the objective of analyzing scientific productions about psychology and its relationship with spirituality.

The choice of the theme arose from the authors' interest in the subject, taking into account the fact that it is little addressed during academic training and because it is a theme that not all approaches to Psychology find consonance in their theoretical constructs and interventions. Regarding this aspect, Freitas (2014) and Geronasso and Moré (2015) report that issues such as religiosity and spirituality in Psychology training have been presented in a timid way, which implies not preparing professionals to deal with the subject, considering that many newly graduated psychologists report that these issues are frequent, but show insecurity to address them for fear of incurring ethical problems (FREITAS, 2014).



For the students, this research is an opportunity to deepen their studies, to understand how spirituality for the psychologist, as a facilitator of the therapeutic process, can recognize this dimension as part of the psychotherapeutic relationship and work on the spiritual dimension of the individual regardless of the religious option. It will benefit not only the academic environment, but also Psychology with regard to the possibility of expanding knowledge about spirituality in the various approaches, practical and clinical contexts and because it is a recurrent theme in our culture, not only in the field of religion, but also at the level of human searches.

With the experience and interaction of this research, we intend to contribute to the training of academics as researchers, and to the construction of our professional identity. We intend to favor suggestions for future studies that provide relationships between the writings on spirituality in the context of psychology by affirming the importance of spirituality in the exercise of the profession. Finally, through its publication it will add a means of disseminating the subject, making it more accessible and popular.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To analyze the scientific productions about psychology and its relationship with the themes of spirituality.

Specific Objectives

- To map the scientific productions that address psychology and its relations with the theme of spirituality;
- Characterize the productions in relation to authors, publication period, topics addressed and results;
- Identify the relationship established between psychology and spirituality.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality accompanies man throughout history. As a component of human life, its influence is not restricted to the sociocultural sphere, but also appears in the constitution of the individual's subjectivity, expressed in beliefs, values, emotions and behaviors related to it. (GERONASSO; MORE, 2015).

According to Oliveira and Junges (2012), spirituality is related to the experience of contact with what transcends the ordinary aspects of life. These authors refer to the understanding of spirituality and religiosity as a singular experience of encounter with oneself, with other human



beings, with the cosmos and with the transcendent (OLIVEIRA; JUNGES, 2012). Volcon *et al* (2003) understand spirituality as a set of all emotions and convictions of a non-material nature, assuming that there is more to living than can be fully perceived and understood.

For Costa (2010), even if spirituality and religiosity are related, they are not the same. While spirituality is universal, available to all, it is not restricted to specific religious beliefs. Religiosity, on the other hand, involves a system of beliefs and doctrines that is shared by a group that has its own behavioral, moral and social characteristics.

When talking about spirituality, Mano (2010) states that:

Spirituality as a phenomenon of intimacy, of relationship with the transcendent, in which there is a daily, voluntary and pleasurable search for self-knowledge and knowledge of the other. This knowledge leads the individual to an awareness of himself, of his competences and limitations (MANO, 2010, p. 15).

Mano (2010) suggests that spirituality precedes religion, and may or may not include a belief in some holiness and/or involvement with religious practices. Its definition is related to the spirit, to an internal need, a search for an understanding of life and of oneself, justifying, based on spiritual experiences, an entire existence (MANO, 2010).

According to Moreira-Almeida and Koenig (2006), spiritual and religious beliefs and practices are strongly based on personal searches to understand the meaning of life, the relationship with the sacred and the transcendent. The authors state that they can influence how people interpret traumatic events and deal with them, promoting resilient perceptions and behaviors such as positive learning from experience, support for overcoming psychological pain, and self-confidence in dealing with adversity. (MOREIRA-ALMEIDA and KOENIG, 2006).

In a treatise on the natural-scientific attitude and the spiritual scientific attitude, the science of the spirit and the science of the mind, the mathematician and philosopher Edmund Husserl, one of the founders of the Phenomenology, states that "the science of the spirit has to do with the spirit, and there is a distinction, in the first place, between the science of nature in the strict sense and the science of the spirit: on the one hand is the science of psychic things, and on the other the sciences of men as persons [...]" (HUSSERL, 2012, p. 304). This distinction must be present from the beginning of any form of theoretical knowledge, since the semantic distinction already indicates to us that the human being can go beyond his strictly natural determination, the one that materially can be seen, and yet, being the possessor of the dimension of the spirit, the one that the natural eyes cannot visualize, only feel. In this sense, it seems important to expand the psychic aspects to the spiritual dimension, thinking about the possibility of a "Psychology of the spirit", considering spirituality, as observed so far, essentially linked to a search for the meaning and purpose of existence. (MANO, 2010).



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

According to Melo (2015), for a long period, science and spirituality were seen as distinct and opposite areas. Currently, rationalist and mechanistic conceptions still predominate in the field of science that tend to devalue what cannot be fully measured, predicted or controlled by technology and reason. It is emphasized, however, that in contrast, there are theoretical lines that seek to promote a more adequate understanding of these phenomena, contributing to effective means of analyzing and studying them (FLECK *et al*, 2003).

The spiritual dimension, in many moments, is treated as a taboo subject in undergraduate Psychology. It is a topic little discussed by students and teachers, and it represents an element of paramount importance in future therapeutic interventions, in view of its effectiveness in caring for the subjectivity of the client who seeks help from a psychologist. (SCORSOLINI-COMMIN, 2015).

Regarding spirituality in psychology approaches, Cavalheiro (2010) states that in behaviorism and psychoanalysis, spirituality is negatively emphasized, while in aspects of humanism, existentialism, the current cognitive behavioral approach and transpersonal psychology it is understood as determinant and positive aspects in the psychological structure. ((CAVALHEIRO, 2010).

In this same perspective, Cavalheiro and Falcke (2014) conducted a research with psychologists trained in different theoretical approaches on their relationship with Spiritual Well-Being. Through the results obtained, the authors ponder that the personal experiences of psychologists with spirituality influence the choices of theoretical approaches, and the opposite is also true. Thus, the participants who presented the highest index of Spiritual Well-Being, to the detriment of other approaches, were from the theoretical perspectives: Humanism, Gestalt therapy, Systemic, Jungian and Phenomenological-Existential, all of which occurred in the approaches that most open space to talk about spirituality (CAVALHEIRO; FALCKE, 2014).

Oliveira and Junges (2012) point out the relevance of perceiving that spirituality offers important resources to face inevitable stressful situations, in a direct interrelationship with the mental health of individuals.

METHODOLOGY

NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

This is a qualitative research, which aimed to analyze the scientific productions about psychology and its relationship with the theme of spirituality. To carry out this study, the integrative review method was chosen, which, according to Souza, Silva and Carvalho (2010), makes it possible to obtain a consistent overview in relation to the thematic complexity in question. This type of review incorporates a wide range of purposes, such as defining concepts, reviewing theories and evidence,



and analyzing methodological problems of a specific topic. Still on this approach, Botelho, Cunha and Macedo (2011) state that:

"(...) The integrative review method can be incorporated into research carried out in other areas of knowledge, in addition to the areas of health and education, because it makes visible the capacity for systematization of scientific knowledge and so that the researcher can get closer to the problem he or she wishes to assess, outlining an overview of his or her scientific production to know the evolution of the theme over time and, With this, visualize possible research opportunities. (BOTELHO, CUNHA, MACEDO, 2011, p. 133)".

The steps related to the integrative review followed in this study referred to: establishment of the guiding question; selection and acquisition of studies (inclusion and exclusion criteria), evaluation of pre-selected studies, discussion of results, and presentation of the integrative review. According to Souza, Silva and Carvalho (2010), the integrative review is one of the most comprehensive methodologies among the types of review, as it associates different studies and data, providing a broader view of the topic raised.

DATA PRODUCTION

The theme of this study focuses on the relationship between Psychology and Spirituality, with the following guiding question: How does scientific production in theses and dissertations approach psychology and its relationship with spirituality? To answer this question, we conducted a search in the following databases: the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), which encompasses the information systems of theses and dissertations of teaching and research institutions in Brazil, and the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations (CAPES) website.

In the analysis of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sample consisted only of theses and dissertations with authorization for dissemination, using the following descriptors: Psychology, Spirituality and Psychological Practices.

The survey took place between September and December 2022. For data collection, a critical analysis of the included studies was performed, using combinations of descriptors to assist in the definition of the best possible evidence and critically analyzing the data obtained by the research. A publication period between 2012 and 2022 was determined, Because there are few publications in the field. Thus, 78 studies were found, 47 in BDTD and 31 in CAPES.

As inclusion criteria, studies published in Portuguese and studies that deal specifically with the themes of psychology and spirituality were defined. As exclusion criteria, we defined works that do not dialogue with the themes in question, do not have authorized disclosure, unavailable access in full, and present convergence errors. For the data analysis procedures, the abstract, the objective and the results were read in order to select the studies that best met the needs of this research.



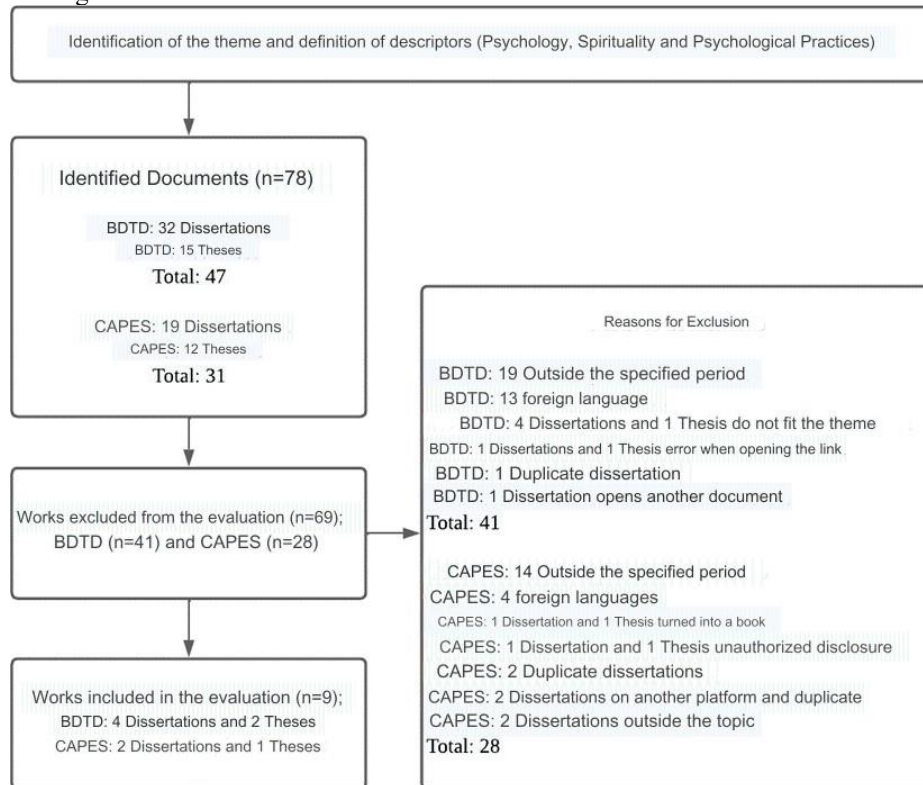
In the BDTD database, 47 documents were found, including theses and dissertations, after cross-referencing the descriptors. Of these, 19 were eliminated for being outside the established publication period, and 13 documents were excluded for being in foreign languages, resulting in 15 papers selected for reading. Of the 15 selected documents, 4 dissertations and 1 thesis were excluded because they did not fit the proposed theme. In addition, 1 thesis and 1 dissertation had an error when opening the link, 1 dissertation was duplicated, and 1 dissertation opened another document, resulting in 6 papers (2 theses and 4 dissertations) remaining.

In the CAPES database, 31 works were found, including theses and dissertations, after cross-referencing the descriptors. Of these, 14 were eliminated for being outside the period determined for the inclusion criteria, and 4 for being in a foreign language, resulting in 13 works selected for reading. Of the 13 selected documents, 1 thesis and 1 dissertation were excluded because they had become a book, 1 thesis and 1 dissertation were excluded because they did not have authorized disclosure, 2 dissertations were excluded because they were duplicates, and 2 dissertations were excluded because they were already included in the other platform and were already the object of research of this work, resulting in 5 remaining works.

Of the 5 works (1 thesis and 4 dissertations), 2 dissertations were eliminated because they were not in accordance with the theme addressed, when observed in more detail, resulting in 3 works (1 thesis and 2 dissertations).

The analysis of the data extracted from the studies was carried out based on the study category "Psychology and its relationship with spirituality", taking into account the view of each selected author. The sample of this integrative review totaled 9 works, including theses and dissertations, published between 2012 and 2020, according to the central theme presented. This information is presented in the flowchart in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Flowchart of the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the studies found



Source: Authors, 2023

The material selected for analysis will be coded with the initials of the work modality in numeral sequence, being D1 - D6 and T1 - T3.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

As mentioned in the methodology, 9 studies published in Brazil were analyzed, 3 theses and 6 dissertations, about psychology and its relationship with spirituality, the databases used to obtain the results were BDTD and CAPES. Chart 1 presents the information of the research found, indicating the platforms, types of studies, authors and years.



Chart 1: Characterization of the selected studies

No.	PLATFORM	THESES/DISSERTATION	TITLE	AUTHOR	YEAR	METHOD
T1	BDTD	Thesis Program Post-graduation in Psychology UFJF	Religiosity/Spirituality ⁴ in a national sample of Brazilian psychologists: profile and implications in practice professional	Pedrita Reis Vargas Paulino	2019	Qualitative-quantitative research.
D1	BDTD	Dissertation Program Post-graduation in Psychology UFPR	Gestalt Perspectives on Spirituality/Religiosity	Lázaro Castro Silva Nascimento	2015	Qualitative research
D2	BDTD	Interdisciplinary Studies Dissertation About UFBA University	Spirituality, Religion, and Psychology: An Integrative Review in the Journals Brazilian Psychology Courses	Jéssica Plácido Silva	2017	Integrative review
D3	BDTD	Dissertation Graduate Studies Program in Psychology: Clinical Psychology PUC - SP	The religiosity and spirituality of students in the psychologist training course	Terezinha Carmen Gandelman	2013	Qualitative research
D4	BDTD	Dissertation Program Post-Graduation in Psychology UFTM	Religiosity/Spirituality (R/E) in clinical psychological practice: psychotherapists	Vivian Fukumasu da Cunha	2017	Qualitative research
T2	BDTD	Thesis Graduate Studies Program in Education: Educational Psychology PUC-SP	Spirituality in the work of authors of psychology, health and education	Márcia Gouvêa Lousada	2017	Integrative review
T3	CAPES	Thesis Program Post-graduation in, Clinical Psychology UNICAP	Religiosity, Spirituality and Psychotherapy in the Academic Training of the Psychologist	Ananda Kenney da Cunha Nascimento	2017	Qualitative research
D5	CAPES	Dissertation Graduate Program in Psychology UFRJ	Cognitive Behavioral Therapists in the face of religiosity/spirituality in the psychotherapeutic context	Diana Soledade do Lago Camera	2020	Quantitative research

⁴ The works that do not make the distinction between Religiosity and Spirituality present the concepts as Religiosity/Spirituality and this form that the authors put was maintained in the text when there was reference to their work.

D6	CAPES	Dissertation Graduate Program in UFU Psychology	The constructs religiosity, spirituality and mental health in the light of Behavioural Therapies	Juliana Assunção da Silva	2012	Literature review
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Source: Author, 2023.

The publication period of these papers ranges from 2012 to 2020, with a higher concentration in 2017, with 4 papers. Most of the studies were developed in the Southeast region, with 6 studies, one in the Northeast and one in the South. Regarding the methodology, the two quantitative studies present surveys carried out with psychologists. T1 conducted a national survey with 4300 psychologists, and two studies were conducted within specific theoretical approaches. D1 had the participation of 198 Brazilian gestalt therapists, while D5 involved 205 cognitive-behavioral therapists. Qualitative research was carried out through interviews with 24 clinical psychologists (D4) and 2 students in the process of training (T3). Two studies were integrative reviews (D2 and T2), and D6 conducted a literature review of national and international articles and TCCs.

Regarding the objectives of the research analyzed, the general objectives of T1, D1, D4, T3 and D5 are related to religiosity and spirituality in the context of clinical practices. The understanding of the concepts of religiosity, spirituality and psychology is the focus of the works D2, D3, D6 and T2. The theoretical currents that underlie the research are linked to the objectives of D1, D6 and T3, being respectively Gestalt, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Logotherapy/existential psychology and Analytical Psychology. The psychologists' personal perspective on the topic and its repercussions are addressed on T1, while the patients' perspective is explored on D5.

A grouping of the results was carried out based on a thematic analysis, resulting in 2 categories: relationship between religiosity/spirituality, and training and clinical practice. These categories are presented in the table below.

Theme	Thesis/Dissertation
Relationship between religiosity and spirituality	D1 D2 D5 D6 T2 T3
Training	D2 D3 D4 D5 D6 T1 T2 T3
Clinical practice	D1 D3 D4 D6 T1 T3



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND SPIRITUALITY

In Nascimento's (2017) work, the interviewees defined religion as a socially shared belief and system of ideas. This system is composed of several concepts, doctrines, beliefs, among others. Religiosity, on the other hand, encompasses religion as ideas systematized by social groups and concerns personal beliefs. Spirituality, on the other hand, may or may not be related to religious belief, but it is focused on the search for meaning in life.

Nascimento (2015) presents in his research the discussion on the theme of spirituality and religiosity in Gestalt therapy. The author conducted interviews with 198 psychologists on the subject of spirituality and found a great understanding on the part of the interviewees, which encompassed transcendental and immaterial aspects, understanding spirituality as part of human existence in general. However, the author also described the participants' difficulty in conceptually differentiating between spiritual and religious practices, which is partly due to the lack of an approach to the subject in the training of psychologists. In this sense, the author emphasizes the importance of a more specific approach to the subject and the realization of studies in this direction for theoretical questions and reflection on gestalt practice.

In turn, Lousada (2017) seeks to understand the concept of spirituality in literature. The author points out that, although the theme is presented in a beneficial and useful way, none of the authors analyzed adopts a single definition, and it can always be associated with the improvement of self-concept, autonomy, health and quality of life. The author also highlights the difficulty of professionals in determining which place spirituality should occupy, as well as a more complex and broader conception of the human being, considering it as an inherent and constructive aspect of the subject.

The researched literary sources understand spirituality as an object of study in psychology, as they recognize its impact on people's lives. The articles highlight the importance of spirituality for a more human formation and believe that it is a foundation of educational practice, capable of assisting in the task of forming a human being (LOUSADA, 2017).

The results described by Silva (2017) showed, in general, an association between religiosity, spirituality, and mental health, highlighting specific relationships between mental disorders (such as mood disorder and alcohol use and abuse), and these relationships, in most cases, are pointed out as positive and predictors of health. In addition, the publications raise points about religious coping and its relationship with clinical conditions and stressful events, showing that, in most cases, religiosity presented benefits in stress management.

Although the present research focuses on the relationship between spirituality and psychology, this specificity appears only in 2 studies (D1, T2), in the others spirituality is related to religiosity or was not differentiated, always being presented in the R/E relationship.



The complexity of the theme was made explicit by the various positions presented, but it allowed the look at the theme to be given from a perspective that was not only individual of a certain theorist or small group, but that investigated a significant portion of the Brazilian gestalt community. (D1, p. 64,65).

“[...] Both in the area of psychology and in the area of health, difficulties were detected in forming a single and tangible concept about spirituality, since the multiplicity of uses that the word allows, makes difficult the task of "grasping" it, of "apprehending" it, of forming a unique and tangible concept about it". (D5., p. 171).

Nascimento (2017) and Câmara (2020) point out that religiosity involves cultural contexts mediated by institutions for its practice. The differentiation between the semantic fields of religion and religiosity is highlighted by a research,

[...] In the semantic field of 'religion', we identify the presence of religious symbols, linked to the totality of being, in religious myths, in representations of a sacred character, in rites and ceremonies. In the semantic field of 'religiosity', the symbolisms were shown to be related to the rituals of religious institutions, linked to intrinsic and extrinsic beliefs. (S3, p. 178).

[...] the sphere of religiosity refers to a social context, an adherence to the beliefs and practices of a religion, church, or institution (D5., p. 161).

Nascimento (2017) points out that according to Frankl and Jung there are approximations between religion and spirituality,

[...] Religiosity, that is, the experience of an institutionalized practice of a religion, is not mandatory for man to experience spirituality, but it promotes spiritual health; Religion is a significant and favorable possibility for man with regard to the attribution of meaning to his experiences of suffering; And the religious man is the one who, when he becomes aware of his ontological condition of transcendence, takes responsibility for his choices and approaches the wholeness of the being and, therefore, the integration of human dimensions for the sake of health. (T3., p. 177).

Nascimento (2015) points out that spirituality and religiosity have been increasingly sought to understand life, pointing out that the participants of his research defined spirituality as a "*biopsychosociospiritual factor* of the human being that composes our experiences, thus bringing an understanding of spirituality as a human dimension." (D1, p. 61) A similar result was found by Câmara (2020).

From the sphere of spirituality, understandings of the search for meaning, of unity, of connection and interconnection, of sacred character, of transcendence [...] that oppose materiality and promote the liberation of the immediate, the concrete, the here-now [...] a final group of forces, which comes out of the person and establishes a connection with something greater and more durable, such as the future, the divine, the universe. It is understood as something more individual, a personal relationship with something considered superior, sacred, divine [...] Despite having specific practical exercises, spirituality generally does not appear linked to an instituted form of religiosity [...] since many do not consider religion important in their lives, but declare that they believe in something sacred and live their spirituality in a non-religious way. (D5., p. 160).



This relationship of religiosity and spirituality, as a relationship and not equality, is also present in the literature of the area, and Boff (2006) and Costa (2010) point out the need to dismember them so that we can expand research in the area, a factor also pointed out in the analyzed works. This, according to the research analyzed, will allow the insertion of non-religious approaches in therapeutic treatments, but that incorporate experiences of consciousness.

TRAINING

Gandelman (2013) exposes the practice of religiosity/spirituality of psychology students through interviews with two students. For the interviewees, religiosity/spirituality was part of the process of choosing the profession and they had to deal with it internally for their personal development, seeking to understand psychology to understand the human being. The interviewees affirm that they separate the profession from the religious/spiritual practice well, without one interfering with the other. However, they report the lack of approach to the subject in their academic training and see psychology and religiosity/spirituality as conflicting, without knowing how to discuss these themes and clarify their divergences, possible approximations and distances.

Cunha (2017) mentions that the absence of the theme of spirituality in the training of psychologists generates both professional and personal difficulties, which hinders a practical approach. It is understood that there are several factors that influence the psychotherapist's personal and professional values, such as childhood and family experiences, culture, education, political affiliations, and approach to action and clinical care.

Nascimento (2017) aims to understand the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and psychotherapeutic practice in the academic training of psychologists in the state of Pernambuco. The logotherapy approach stands out, which is characterized by the exploration of the human experience based on the motivation for freedom and the meaning of life. Logotherapy seeks to find meaning in people and deal with suffering, guilt, and death. This approach presents a structured therapeutic method, with specific goals, procedures, and techniques for each patient who experiences some type of existential suffering.

Based on the statements of health professionals, it is evident that there is a need for training that is more focused on religiosity/spirituality.

In the professionals' statements, the need for training on the subject is very clear, in terms of the word "evidence". By searching for evidence for the use of R/E, they bring to the fore the commitment to offering a scientifically proven practice. (D4, p. 72).

Due to inexperience, lack of opportunity to deal with the subject during academic training and difficulty in relating religious and spiritual experiences in their training, the interviewees experience the separation of Psychology from the religious and spiritual dimensions as conflicting, and not being able to make an articulation between these dimensions, in the sense of discussing them and clarifying their dissonances. possible approximations and distances. (D3., p.70)tag.



However, the lack of preparation of future psychologists to deal with this dimension leads to the separation between Psychology and religiosity/spirituality, preventing the articulation and understanding of the dissonances and approximations between them.

[...] religiosity, spirituality and health in the practice of health professionals, pointing out that professionals need training more directed to training to manage the themes of religiosity and spirituality in their work contexts. (T3., p.174).

Other articles presented spirituality in relation to the training of health professionals, showing that it is a growing theme in the scientific environment and paying attention to the need for preparatory courses that allow professionals to experiment before offering them to patients; observed that these professionals have been including spirituality in their lives; and, finally, they believe in the growing importance of the theme for the health area. (D5., p. 171).

[...] A new look at professional training is needed, which contemplates the importance of debating religious and spiritual issues capable of guiding the conduct of future psychologists and reducing their doubts and conflicts in psychological care, focusing on the bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual development of patients. (D3. p.70,71).

The selected researchers emphasized that spirituality is being inserted in the areas of education and health, pointing to the importance of preparing professionals to conduct the theme in their professional environments, emphasizing the inclusion of the theme in the training of psychologists, physicians and health professionals. (D5., p. 167).

The need for more research in the area of spirituality is also mentioned, as mentioned by authors D2, D5 and T2. It is noted that:

[...] most of the authors who have published articles on R/E are not systematic researchers, or that the authors who systematically study the subject are not publishing in Brazilian journals of Psychology, but in journals of other categories or international [...] (D2, p. 30).

[...] To the proposals for the use of spirituality, the researchers suggest a new area called "Psychology of Spirituality" that would encompass the need to expand research that conceptualizes, differentiates and relates its components. (D5., p. 167).

[...] Regarding the academic activities in psychology that the respondents had performed and that made some mention of R/E, only 23 (8.7%) therapists participated in studies that addressed the theme. It was also possible to observe that most of the participants had already studied the subject on their own (183/69.6%) and had already gone to academic events related to the theme (123/46.8%). (D5, p. 85)

As for the theoretical frameworks used in psychology, it is identified that Logotherapy, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Psychodrama are pointed out as influential in the context of religiosity and spirituality.

The theoretical frameworks that increase the chance of considering religiosity/spirituality issues "often or always" relevant were: Cognitive-Behavioral (38%), Eclectic (118%) and others (53%). What decreases the chance of the "often or always" relevant R/E questions was Behavioral (43%). With the exception of the theoretical references Cognitive and Psychodrama, the others increase the chance of asking "often" or "always" about religiosity/spirituality: Behavioral (103%), Cognitive-behavioral (228%), Eclectic (148%), Gestalt (137%), Psychoanalysis (44%) and others (51%). (T1., p. 92).



However, it is important to highlight that the behavioral and cognitive theoretical frameworks have a lower tendency to consider these issues as frequently or always relevant.

Regarding the theoretical frameworks in psychology as predictors of training in religiosity/spirituality, R/E approach and personal belief with the exception of the behavioral and cognitive theoretical framework, the others increase the chance of having training: Cognitive Behavioral (49%), Eclectic (153%), Gestalt (71%), Psychoanalysis (26%), Psychodrama (226%) and others (97%). (T1, p. 92).

This information highlights the importance of deepening the discussion and knowledge about spirituality in professional training and in the practice of psychology, as well as the need to encourage systematic research in this area.

The approach to spirituality within psychology varies according to different theoretical currents. According to Cavalheiro (2010), behaviorism and psychoanalysis tend to emphasize spirituality in a negative way, while aspects of humanism, existentialist, cognitive-behavioral approach and transpersonal psychology understand it as a determining and positive aspect in the psychological structure. (GENTLEMAN, 2010).

However, the spiritual dimension, in many moments, is treated as a taboo subject in Psychology graduation. It is a topic that is little discussed by students and teachers, and it represents an element of paramount importance in future therapeutic interventions, in view of its effectiveness in caring for the subjectivity of the client who seeks help from a psychologist. (SCORSOLINI-COMMIN, 2015).

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE AND SPIRITUALITY

In Paulino (2019), it showed that 62% of respondents believe that religiosity/spirituality (R/E) is beneficial for mental health. However, 65% of respondents do not consider R/E relevant to their patients' treatments. The author suggests that this divergence occurs due to the lack of specific training on how to deal clinically with this issue, as stated by the interviewees. The author also states that training and practice increase belief in the benefits of R/E for mental health, resulting in an increase in patients' questions on the subject, which he considers relevant.

Gandelman (2013) explores the practice of religiosity of psychology students through interviews with two students. For the interviewees, religiosity/spirituality was part of the process of choosing the profession, and they needed to work internally on this issue for their personal development, seeking to understand psychology as a way of understanding the human being. The interviewees affirm that they clearly separate the profession from the practice of religiosity/spirituality and see psychology and R/E as conflicting, without knowing how to discuss the subject and clarify their differences, possible approximations and distances.



In the work of Cunha (2017), we seek to understand religiosity/spirituality in the clinical context of psychotherapy professionals and how these professionals perceive, consider and incorporate these aspects in their clinical practices and in their lives. The author also describes the difficulty faced due to the lack of approach to the subject during graduation. The data obtained in its analysis are based on a sample of 24 respondents, divided into 2 studies. Study 1 aims to know the professional reality of psychotherapists in relation to their clinical experiences and the dimension of religiosity/spirituality (R/E). The author points out that R/H manifests itself both as an important resource for intervention and as an obstacle to the development of certain conditions, which suggests the need for greater dialogue between them.

Based on the participants' answers, it was possible to identify that R/H is important in people's lives and is present in the psychotherapeutic relationship, even if indirectly. For the professionals interviewed, it is a relevant dimension in people's lives, but it is not necessarily important in their own lives. They frequently employ an argument from authority to recognize their importance from a scientific standpoint. The reports show that R/E helps in moments of greater tension, gives meaning and organizes the lives of most people, helps in the follow-up of psychotherapy and reveals that some people need religion more than others. However, there are several conflicts between patients and religion, especially when life practices are not in accordance with religious rules, as in the case of sexuality, which generates conflict (CUNHA, 2017).

In study 2 by Cunha (2017), the author aims to know how psychotherapists experience R/E in their personal lives and how this dimension relates to work in clinical psychology. It was found that most psychotherapists have some form of religious/spiritual belief or experience that permeates their relationship with psychotherapy, indicating an interest in including this theme in the discussions, even if it goes against their beliefs.

Nascimento (2017) interviewed three professionals and three interns to evaluate the theme of R/E, dividing it into four categories: personal information; religious symbolism; religiosity/spirituality and self-knowledge in the interviewees' experiences on the subject (teaching and psychotherapeutic practice, relationship between religiosity and/or spirituality and psychopathology, work and supervision space, and positions of psychology councils on the subject); and the experiences of the students/trainees in the academic training, the faith of the psychotherapist and the interventions of the psychotherapist in the face of this theme.

Based on the experience of the interviewees, the teaching experience adds to the situation of science and helps to get out of scientism. Students, on the other hand, are more focused on issues related to religion and religiosity. In practice, there is a need for the psychotherapist to be aware of the interferences of its contents and highlights the importance of the discipline of psychopathology and the debates that relate mental disorders to social and culture.



Camera (2020) analyzed the perception of cognitive-behavioral therapists in relation to the religiosity and spirituality of their patients during the therapeutic process. Their work was carried out with 263 participants and found the clinical experiences, where the methods most used by professionals for treatment were mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, compassion-focused therapy and metacognitive therapy.

The first part of the questionnaire addressed the participants' opinion on the importance of attributing and investigating the influence of R/E on some aspects of treatment, classifying it as very important in the belief system (40.7%), in the well-being (40.7%), in the quality of life (37.3%) and in coping with adversities (39.5%). The results described by Câmara (2020) show that R/H is more linked to the psychotherapist's relationship with religion/spirituality than to their professional training. He adds the need for more initiatives in the context of undergraduate, graduate, research, among others, that can better train professionals in the area to address the subject.

Silva (2017) presents the results of the Brazilian panorama on the relations between religion, spirituality and psychology. He analyzed a general collection of 182 articles and 10 articles in more depth. Its results reveal a critical analysis indicating that the published studies do not demonstrate a practical relationship between the psychologist's profession and R/E. Although many authors point out these practices as positive, most point them out as negative.

Based on Silva's (2017) literature review, the method of coping with problems is presented, in which both religion/spirituality and psychology help the person to overcome and relieve symptoms. However, the practice of coping through R/E is not approved by psychologists in general. The author describes three styles used by people to deal with difficult situations: self-directed, delegating, and collaborative. In the former, the individual takes responsibility for his or her problems; in the second, he expects everything from God without acting; in the third, they work together. In any case, the person seeks meaning, control, spiritual comfort, contact with God and people, and transformation of life.

The articles analyzed in the research indicated several points of view, which are described as follows: religious belief seems to have associations with personality factors; Specific religious orientations show that certain beliefs can contribute to the occurrence of mental illness; The influence of religious aspects on the healing and treatment of diseases throughout history is described; Religions are capable of affecting specific brain structures and resulting in psychiatric symptoms. In general, the articles presented positive and negative points of coping (Lousada, 2017).

The analyzed studies reveal the importance of religiosity/spirituality in the psychotherapeutic context:

[...] Most of the professionals stated that they think that religiosity/spirituality helps patients to cope with the disease and suffering (sometimes 35.5%, often or always 56.9%), as well as



leading the patient to a state of positive and hopeful thinking (sometimes 37.6%, often or always 55.8%). (T1, p. 79).

For most of the interviewees (n = 14), R/H is a subject of professional interest because it is manifested and, in most cases, important for their patients [...] (D4, p. 71).

These aspects highlight the need for professionals to be prepared to address and understand the religious/spiritual dimension in clinical practice, aiming to offer comprehensive care that is sensitive to the needs of individuals seeking psychological support.

All interviewees recognize that issues related to R/E appear in the patients' discourses, but they are not always configured as a demand to be addressed [...] (D4, p. 64).

This indicates that religion and spirituality are themes that emerge and permeate the clinical context. However, although relevant, these therapeutic proposals still lack sufficient study material to be considered more effective than conventional mental health treatments.

[...] As for clinical practices, reflections are presented on the role of these cognitions and their impact on treatments when they are addressed directly or indirectly by mental health professionals. At this point, some therapeutic possibilities are described that are already proposed to incorporate these variables, in addition to demonstrating results obtained from them. Although these proposals are relevant, they do not present sufficient study material to consider them more effective than conventional mental health treatments. [...] (D6, p. 93, 94).

Despite this, it is important to note that spirituality has emerged during psychotherapeutic consultations in a significant percentage of cases.

[..] The theme of spirituality having already emerged during psychotherapeutic care, we found a total of 89% of affirmative answers, which is a confirmation of the importance of studies such as this one in which the interface between spirituality/religiosity and psychological clinic are discussed. (D1, p. 57).

Since R/H is a subject that arises and permeates the clinical context, either by the investigation of professionals or even spontaneously from patients, some professionals use R/E as a resource or therapeutic strategy to guide interventions, when necessary. (D4, p. 36).

Thus, the citations point to the frequent presence of religiosity/spirituality in the clinical context, the need for an appropriate therapeutic approach, and the recognition of the importance of these issues by both professionals and patients. However, they also highlight the lack of substantial scientific development in this area and the need for more research and specific studies to support therapeutic interventions related to religiosity/spirituality.

It is considered that the unanimous recognition of the importance of R/E among the interviewees conveys a message that psychotherapy is a space to talk about everything, enabling these professionals to deal with religious/spiritual feelings and behaviors, which does not necessarily mean having the skills and knowledge to do so. (D4, p. 30).



[...] There are also demands that religious/spiritual issues be discussed and psychotherapeutic focused, which does not inhibit professionals from working on the subject, even if, for the most part, training has been considered deficient in relation to the subject. (D4., p 29).

[...] The influence of the interviewees' religiosity and spirituality on their clinical practices causes insecurities in the students when they are faced with religious and spiritual issues. (D3., p.70)

The specific scientific production on the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and mental health is described as quite restricted.

[...] The articles, all published in a little more than a decade, tend to discuss 94 relationships between psychological variables from various theoretical foundations without exploring more deeply the relationships with religiosity/spirituality. In other words, the specific production in this area is quite restricted. Journals specialized in the publication of studies in this field present few studies that relate religiosity, spirituality and mental health and most of them do not deal with the therapies themselves, being more focused on the evaluations of religious cognitions and mental health [...] (D6, p. 93, 94).

Cavalheiro and Falcke (2014) conducted a research with psychologists trained in different theoretical approaches on the relationship between these and Spiritual Well-Being. Through the results obtained, the authors ponder that the personal experiences of psychologists with spirituality influence the choices of theoretical approaches, and the opposite is also true. Thus, the participants who presented the highest index of Spiritual Well-Being, to the detriment of other approaches, were from the theoretical perspectives: Humanism, Gestalt therapy, Systemic, Jungian and Phenomenological-Existential, all of which occurred in the approaches that most open space to talk about spirituality.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It was possible to identify, from the studies carried out, the relationship between the practice of psychology and spirituality as a complex theme. Most authors describe the lack of approach to the subject, especially in undergraduate courses, which makes it difficult to deal with it efficiently.

The subject demonstrates the need for more studies focused on the area, as there are several understandings about psychology and spirituality, there is no distinction between religiosity and spirituality, and authors who point out this need since spirituality is a belief system that encompasses subjective elements that give meaning to events in people's lives. The studies indicate that although most psychologists have religious affiliation, they themselves seek to know more about the subject, leaving aside their beliefs to perform treatments with patients.

The theoretical currents that underlie the research are linked to the objectives of three works, being respectively Gestalt, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Logotherapy/existential psychology and Analytical Psychology. Several treatment techniques are cited by the authors, such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, dialectical behavior therapy,



compassion-focused therapy, and metacognitive therapy. Logotherapy seeks to explore the human motivation for freedom and meaning in life, seeking to find meaning in people and dealing with suffering, guilt, and death.

Each person is unique in their religious and spiritual experience, and it is essential for psychology professionals to take an individualized approach when dealing with religious and spiritual issues. For many people, spirituality is a significant source of emotional support, meaning, and purpose. This means acknowledging and respecting each patient's beliefs, values, and spiritual practices, tailoring treatment according to their specific needs. They should not impose their own beliefs on patients, nor should they devalue or belittle their religious and spiritual perspectives.

In relation to the objective of the work, which was to analyze the scientific productions about psychology and its relationship with the themes of spirituality, it was achieved, identifying still scarce Brazilian production in the area and the indistinction between the concepts of religiosity and spirituality. It is suggested that further studies be carried out in the area, especially in relation to how the theme has been treated in the training of psychologists, its presence in the curricula and the content addressed.

As future psychologists, this work contributed, opening a margin for new searches and research on the contents of spirituality, religiosity and what these themes can add to psychology, because as a subject of such a complex subject, and so important for academic life and beyond, the continuity of this theme is of paramount importance.



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