

Religious Education as a Disposition of Consciousness for Self-Knowledge in Contemporary Education

*Ensino Religioso como Disposição da Consciência para o
Autoconhecimento na Educação Contemporânea*

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Abstract

This paper proposes a reconceptualization of religious education within the contemporary educational landscape, framing it as a disposition of consciousness oriented toward self-knowledge. Moving beyond confessional and doctrinal approaches, religious education is examined as an integrative epistemic field capable of bridging science, philosophy, and spirituality. Grounded in the Brazilian educational framework—particularly the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) — this study argues that education must transcend content transmission and assume an ontological dimension centered on the formation of consciousness. Key themes include self-knowledge, virtue, religiosity as a psychic function, contemplative practices, secularism, and citizenship, with particular attention to the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian traditions. The concept of *Qualic Philosophy* is introduced as a theoretical bridge between objective knowledge and lived experience, proposing a transition from the quantum paradigm to *Qualium* —

understood as the experiential dimension of reality. The paper concludes that religious education, when guided by critical, ethical, and transdisciplinary principles, constitutes a fundamental axis for the development of conscious individuals and a more integrated society.

Keywords: Religious education, Consciousness, Self-knowledge, Integral education, Transdisciplinarity, Phenomenology, Qualic philosophy.

Resumo

Este artigo propõe uma reconceitualização da educação religiosa no contexto educacional contemporâneo, enquadrando-a como uma disposição da consciência orientada para o autoconhecimento. Indo além das abordagens confessionais e doutrinárias, a educação religiosa é examinada como um campo epistêmico integrativo capaz de conectar ciência, filosofia e espiritualidade. Fundamentado no marco educacional brasileiro — particularmente na Lei de Diretrizes e Marcos Nacionais de Educação (LDB) e na Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) — este estudo argumenta que a educação deve transcender a transmissão de conteúdo e assumir uma dimensão ontológica centrada na formação da consciência. Os temas principais incluem autoconhecimento, virtude, religiosidade como função psíquica, práticas contemplativas, laicidade e cidadania, com atenção especial à inclusão das tradições afro-brasileiras. O conceito de Filosofia Qualic é introduzido como uma ponte teórica entre o conhecimento objetivo e a experiência vivida, propondo uma transição do paradigma quântico para o Qualium — entendido como a dimensão experiencial da realidade. O artigo conclui que a educação religiosa, quando orientada por princípios críticos, éticos e transdisciplinares, constitui um eixo fundamental para o desenvolvimento de indivíduos conscientes e de uma sociedade mais integrada.

Palavras-chave: Educação religiosa, Consciência, Autoconhecimento, Educação integral, Transdisciplinaridade, Fenomenologia, Filosofia qualica.

1. Introduction

In contemporary educational discourse, religious education remains a contested field, often constrained by historical associations with doctrinal instruction and institutional religion. However, when reframed as a disposition of consciousness oriented toward self-knowledge, religious education emerges as a powerful integrative axis within the broader educational process.

This perspective challenges the fragmentation characteristic of modern education, in which knowledge domains are frequently isolated from one another and from the existential dimension of the learner. By articulating religion, philosophy, and science, religious education can function as a mediating field that restores epistemological coherence and existential meaning.

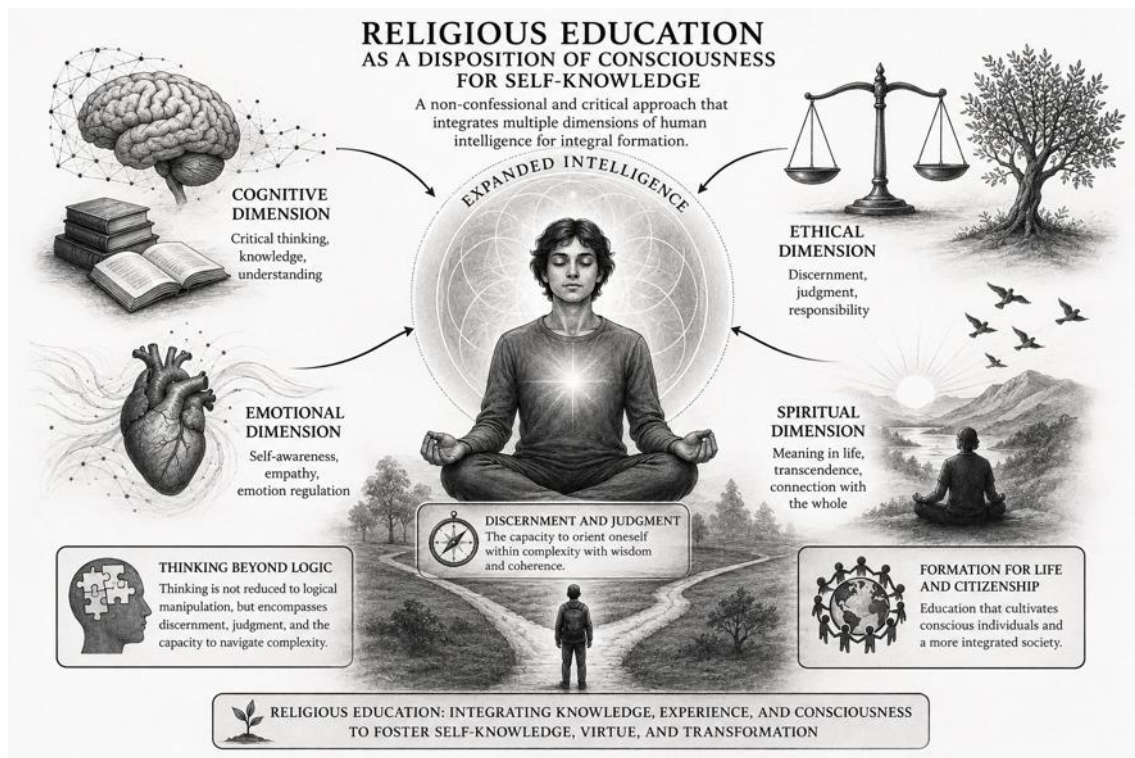
Within the Brazilian context, this approach finds support in the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), both of which emphasize integral human development. Education, in this sense, is not merely the acquisition of information but the formation of consciousness—an ontological process through which the individual comes to understand both self and world.

2. Integral Education and the Formation of Consciousness

The increasing specialization of knowledge has led to a paradox: while technical competence has advanced, existential disorientation has intensified. This suggests that education, when disconnected from consciousness, produces individuals who are functionally capable yet ontologically fragmented.

Religious education, understood in a non-confessional and critical sense, contributes to the development of an expanded intelligence—one that integrates cognitive, emotional, ethical, and spiritual dimensions. In this framework, thinking is not reduced to logical manipulation but encompasses discernment, judgment, and the capacity to orient oneself within complexity.

Figure 1: Religious Education as a disposition of consciousness for self-knowledge



Source: The Authors (2026)

Doubt, therefore, assumes a methodological role. Rather than undermining knowledge, it destabilizes superficial certainties and opens space for deeper inquiry. Education for consciousness is, fundamentally, education for discernment.

3. Self-Knowledge, Virtue, and Ethical Coherence

Self-knowledge constitutes the central axis of any educational project oriented toward consciousness. The recognition of error plays a crucial pedagogical role, not as failure but as an opportunity for reflexivity and transformation.

Virtue, in this context, is not a moralistic construct but the practical expression of consciousness. It represents the alignment between thought, emotion, and action, enabling the individual to navigate complexity with coherence and responsibility.

A critical distinction must be made between superficial critique and deep understanding. While the former tends to fragment, the latter integrates. Education that cultivates understanding fosters psychological balance and supports the development of ethical subjectivity.

4. Religiosity as a Psychic Function and Epistemic Field

Religiosity may be understood as a structural function of the psyche, rather than merely a cultural or institutional phenomenon. From this perspective, the absence of a meaningful relationship with the sacred can lead to existential disorientation, particularly in later stages of life.

A key distinction emerges between faith and belief. Faith, as lived experience, implies awareness and transformation; belief, by contrast, may remain either reflective or unexamined. Religious education, when properly oriented, fosters this distinction and supports intellectual and spiritual autonomy.

By engaging with symbolic systems, existential questions, and the search for meaning, religious education approaches what may be termed a *science of consciousness*, a field that integrates subjective experience with reflective inquiry.

The understanding of religiosity as a structural function of the psyche finds increasing resonance in contemporary consciousness studies. Recent interdisciplinary research suggests that experiences traditionally described as “spiritual” or “transcendent” correspond to identifiable neurophenomenological patterns.

For example, studies in the field of consciousness science (Yaden *et al.*, 2022; Josipovic & Miskovic, 2024) indicate that self-transcendent experiences are associated with decreased activity in the default mode network (DMN), suggesting a temporary dissolution of ego-boundaries. These findings align with classical insights from depth psychology, particularly those of Carl Gustav Jung, regarding the integration of the Self as a trans-egoic center of the psyche.

Moreover, large-scale surveys on mystical-type experiences (Griffiths *et al.*, 2023) demonstrate lasting increases in well-being, prosocial behavior, and meaning-making, reinforcing the idea that religiosity, when approached experientially rather than dogmatically, has measurable psychological and existential benefits.

5. Contemplative Practices and the Crisis of Attention

Contemporary society is marked by hyperconnectivity and informational overload, conditions that fragment attention and reduce the depth of experience. In this context, contemplative practices, particularly meditation and mindfulness-based interventions, have gained increasing empirical support within educational settings.

Recent studies demonstrate that contemplative education enhances attentional stability, emotional regulation, and meta-awareness. For instance, Amishi Jha and colleagues have shown that mindfulness training improves working memory capacity and resilience under stress in high-demand environments. Similarly, randomized controlled trials indicate that school-based mindfulness programs significantly improve students' executive function and socio-emotional competencies (Dahl *et al.*, 2022; Klingbeil *et al.*, 2023).

From a neurocognitive perspective, contemplative practices are associated with functional changes in brain networks related to attention, interoception, and self-referential processing (Tang *et al.*, 2023). These findings reinforce the pedagogical relevance of meditation as an "inner technology" capable of restoring depth in an attention-fragmented culture.

Thus, contemplative education should not be understood as an ancillary practice, but as a central component in the formation of consciousness.

6. Secularism, Citizenship, and Cultural Plurality

The secular nature of the state does not preclude religious education; rather, it requires that such education be plural, critical, and non-confessional. The role of the school is not to convert but to clarify.

Within this framework, religious education contributes to citizenship by promoting intercultural dialogue, respect for diversity, and the development of ethical awareness. The study of religious traditions expands the symbolic repertoire of learners and supports critical thinking.

The inclusion of Afro-Brazilian traditions, such as Candomblé and Umbanda, is particularly significant. These traditions articulate complex cosmologies that integrate ethics, nature, ancestry, and community. Concepts such as ancestralism and *axé* offer alternative epistemologies that challenge individualistic and reductionist paradigms.

Their inclusion in the curriculum is not only pedagogically enriching but also constitutes an act of historical reparation, aligned with principles of social justice and cultural recognition.

7. IA and Transpersonal Psychology

Recent developments in transpersonal psychology have begun to empirically investigate states of expanded consciousness and their implications for psychological development.

Studies published in journals such as the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* and *Frontiers in Psychology* (2022–2024) indicate that practices involving meditation, breathwork, and guided imagery can induce altered states associated with increased meaning, emotional integration, and reduced anxiety (Friedman *et al.*, 2023; Taylor, 2022).

Furthermore, emerging research explores the role of digital environments and AI-mediated interactions in facilitating self-reflection and symbolic processing. While still preliminary, findings suggest that dialogical engagement with AI systems can function as a reflective surface for self-awareness—though risks of projection and dependency remain (de Boer *et al.*, 2024).

This reinforces the transpersonal view that consciousness is not static but developmental, and that tools, whether contemplative or technological, can mediate access to deeper layers of the psyche.

8. Qualic Philosophy and the Transition from Quantum to Qualium

Qualium designates reality as it is integrated and experienced by consciousness, when objective data becomes meaningful experience.

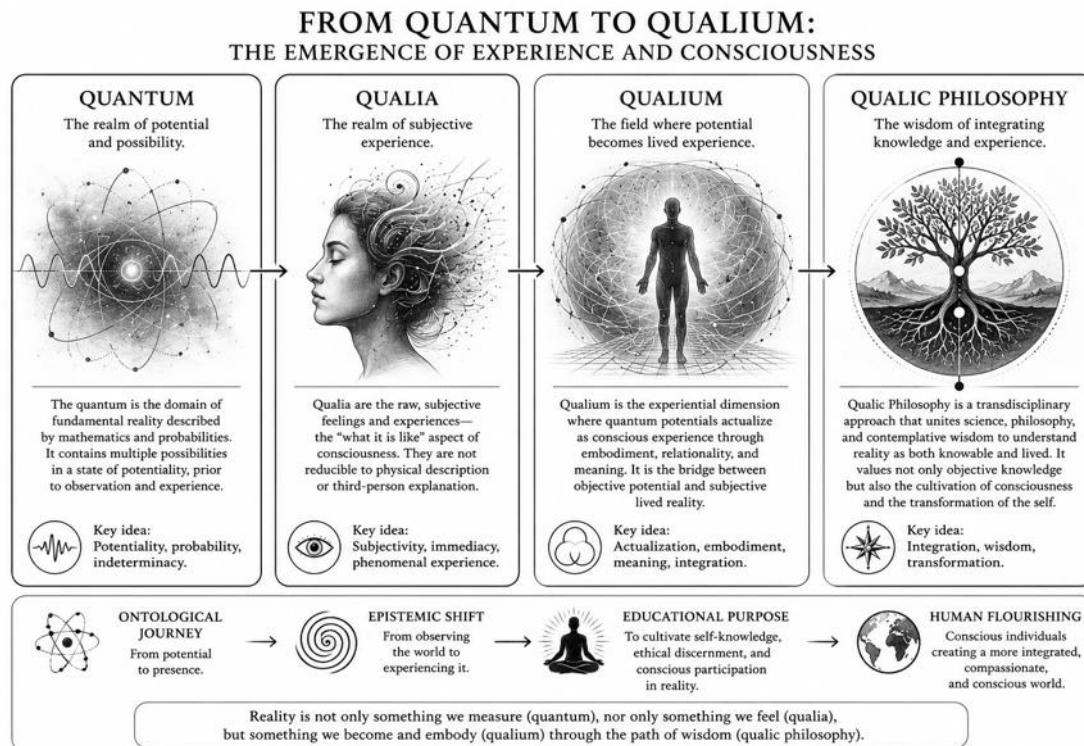
The transition from quantum indeterminacy to lived experience (*Qualium*) may be interpreted through the lens of contemporary consciousness research. Increasingly, scholars argue that subjective experience cannot be reduced to computational or purely physical processes.

The “hard problem of consciousness,” as formulated by David Chalmers, remains unresolved, and recent debates (Chalmers, 2022; Seth, 2023) emphasize the irreducibility of qualitative experience (*qualia*). In parallel, predictive processing frameworks (Friston *et al.*, 2023) suggest that perception itself is an active construction, integrating sensory data with prior models.

Qualic Philosophy extends these insights by proposing that knowledge becomes meaningful only when integrated into lived experience. This aligns with enactive and phenomenological approaches (Varela, Thompson lineage; updated in recent embodied cognition research), which emphasize that cognition is not merely representational but enacted through embodied interaction.

Thus, the movement from quantum to Qualium may be understood as a shift from probabilistic description to experiential integration.

Figure 2: From Quantum to Qualium



Source: The Authors (2026)

9. Conclusion

Religious education, when understood as a disposition of consciousness for self-knowledge, emerges as a fundamental component of integral education. Aligned with contemporary educational frameworks, it supports the development of critical, ethical, and conscious individuals.

Social transformation depends, ultimately, on the transformation of consciousness. The roots of both disorder and harmony lie within the human being. An education that integrates knowledge and consciousness creates the conditions for a more balanced and sustainable civilization.

Education, in this sense, is not merely informative, it is transformative.

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