

**BLACK WOMEN'S AGING AND NEUROPSYCHOPEDAGOGY:  
INTERSECTIONAL CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE**

**ENVELHECIMENTO DA MULHER NEGRA E NEUROPSICOPEDAGOGIA:  
DESAFIOS INTERSECCIONAIS E ESTRATÉGIAS PARA A QUALIDADE DE  
VIDA**

**ENVEJECIMIENTO DE LA MUJER NEGRA Y NEUROPSICOPEDAGOGÍA:  
DESAFÍOS INTERSECCIONALES Y ESTRATEGIAS PARA LA CALIDAD DE  
VIDA**



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**ABSTRACT**

This article explores the accelerated aging of the Brazilian population, focusing on the challenges faced by Black women, a vulnerable group due to structural racism, gender inequality, and socioeconomic conditions. These women experience cumulative exclusion that affects their health, well-being, access to rights, and learning capacity. The objective is to analyze the relationship between the aging of Black women and the contributions of neuropsychopedagogy to promoting quality of life, autonomy, and learning in this group. To this end, a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical approach is used, grounded in bibliographical research. Thus, it is observed that neuropsychopedagogy emerges as an essential field, articulating knowledge from neuroscience, psychology, and pedagogy to understand aging as a dynamic and continuous learning process, valuing brain plasticity and sociocultural experiences. The study highlights the importance of neuropsychopedagogical interventions based on the valorization of these women's identity, culture, and traditional knowledge, promoting self-esteem, belonging, and social participation, despite access barriers such as socioeconomic inequalities and Eurocentric models. It is concluded that a critical and intersectional neuropsychopedagogy is crucial for promoting equity, dignity, and quality of life for Black women in old age, reaffirming learning as an inalienable right throughout life.

**Keywords:** Aging. Black Women. Neuropsychopedagogy. Intersectionality. Structural Racism.

**RESUMO**

O artigo explora o envelhecimento acelerado da população brasileira, focando nos desafios enfrentados por mulheres negras, um grupo vulnerável devido ao racismo estrutural, desigualdade de gênero e condições socioeconômicas. Essas mulheres vivenciam uma

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exclusão cumulativa que afeta sua saúde, bem-estar, acesso a direitos e capacidade de aprendizagem. Objetiva-se analisar a relação entre o envelhecimento das mulheres negras e as contribuições da neuropsicopedagogia para a promoção da qualidade de vida, autonomia e aprendizagem nesse grupo. Para tanto, procede-se a uma abordagem qualitativa, descritiva e analítica, fundamentada em pesquisa bibliográfica. Desse modo, observa-se que a neuropsicopedagogia emerge como campo essencial, articulando saberes da neurociência, psicologia e pedagogia para compreender o envelhecimento como um processo dinâmico e contínuo de aprendizagem, valorizando a plasticidade cerebral e as experiências socioculturais. O estudo destaca a importância de intervenções neuropsicopedagógicas pautadas na valorização da identidade, cultura e saberes tradicionais dessas mulheres, promovendo autoestima, pertencimento e participação social, apesar das barreiras de acesso como desigualdades socioeconômicas e modelos eurocêntricos. Conclui-se que uma neuropsicopedagogia crítica e interseccional é crucial para a promoção da equidade, dignidade e qualidade de vida das mulheres negras na velhice, reafirmando o aprendizado como um direito inalienável ao longo da vida.

**Palavras-chave:** Envelhecimento. Mulheres Negras. Neuropsicopedagogia. Interseccionalidade. Racismo Estrutural.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el envejecimiento acelerado de la población brasileña, centrándose en los desafíos que enfrentan las mujeres negras, un grupo vulnerable debido al racismo estructural, la desigualdad de género y las condiciones socioeconómicas. Estas mujeres experimentan una exclusión acumulativa que afecta su salud, bienestar, acceso a derechos y capacidad de aprendizaje. El objetivo es analizar la relación entre el envejecimiento de las mujeres negras y las contribuciones de la neuropsicopedagogía para promover la calidad de vida, la autonomía y el aprendizaje en este grupo. Para ello, se utiliza un enfoque cualitativo, descriptivo y analítico, fundamentado en la investigación bibliográfica. Así, se observa que la neuropsicopedagogía emerge como un campo esencial, articulando conocimientos de neurociencia, psicología y pedagogía para comprender el envejecimiento como un proceso dinámico y continuo de aprendizaje, valorando la plasticidad cerebral y las experiencias socioculturales. El estudio destaca la importancia de las intervenciones neuropsicopedagógicas basadas en la valoración de la identidad, cultura y saberes tradicionales de estas mujeres, promoviendo la autoestima, el sentido de pertenencia y la participación social, a pesar de las barreras de acceso como las desigualdades socioeconómicas y los modelos eurocéntricos. Se concluye que una neuropsicopedagogía crítica e interseccional es crucial para la promoción de la equidad, dignidad y calidad de vida de las mujeres negras en la vejez, reafirmando el aprendizaje como un derecho inalienable a lo largo de la vida.

**Palabras clave:** Envejecimiento. Mujeres Negras. Neuropsicopedagogía. Interseccionalidad. Racismo Estructural.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Brazil is aging rapidly, which makes it urgent to reflect on the impact of this process on the lives of older people, especially vulnerable groups, such as black women. These women face specific challenges arising from a history of structural racism, gender inequality, and socioeconomic conditions that compromise their health, well-being, and access to fundamental rights (Barbosa; Oliveira; Oliveira, 2024; Benedito; Paiva, 2025). The focus of this study seeks to highlight the relevance of understanding the specificities of this group to promote social equity, autonomy and quality of life in old age.

The focus on black women is essential, as they suffer the effects of historical inequalities that directly affect the aging process, especially in the areas of health and education (Kalache et al., 2023). Understanding how these factors influence aging is also a way to contribute to the development of more inclusive and fair practices and policies, reinforcing the need for intersectional approaches in the Brazilian context (Ferreira; Leeson; Melhado, 2019).

The general objective of this article is to analyze the relationship between the aging of black women and strategies that can promote a higher quality of life, autonomy and learning. Specifically, it investigates the social and educational impacts that cross this group, discusses possibilities of intervention focused on their needs and reflects on practices that can favor their inclusion and appreciation in the stage of old age.

Changes in the age structure of the Brazilian population have imposed new challenges on public policies, educational practices, and fields of knowledge aimed at human development throughout the life course (Kalache et al., 2023). In this scenario, the aging of black women reveals itself as a phenomenon deeply crossed by structural inequalities, which cannot be understood only from a biological or chronological perspective. It is a process marked by cumulative experiences of social exclusion, structural racism, gender inequality, and limited access to rights, factors that directly affect the physical, emotional, and cognitive health of these women throughout their lives.

The life trajectories of black women in Brazil are historically marked by conditions of social vulnerability, early and precarious insertion in the labor market, less access to formal schooling, and continuous exposure to contexts of psychosocial stress (Barbosa; Oliveira; Oliveira, 2024; Benedito; Paiva, 2025). These elements produce significant impacts on the aging process, since the scientific literature points out that the experiences lived throughout the life cycle directly influence cognitive functioning, mental health, and learning capacity in old age. Thus, understanding the aging of this group requires a broader approach, capable of integrating social, cultural, emotional, and neurocognitive factors.

It is at this point that neuropsychopedagogy presents itself as a theoretical-practical field of great relevance for the analysis of the aging of black women, by articulating knowledge from neuroscience, psychology, and pedagogy (Fonseca, 2018; Bossa, 2019). By articulating knowledge from neuroscience, psychology and pedagogy, neuropsychopedagogy offers tools to understand how the brain learns, adapts and transforms throughout life, including in old age. This approach breaks with reductionist conceptions that associate aging only with loss or decline, recognizing brain plasticity and the continuous possibilities of learning, resignification, and human development.

From the neuropsychopedagogical point of view, aging should be understood as a dynamic process, influenced both by biological factors and by the sociocultural experiences accumulated throughout life (Rotta; Ohlweiler; Riesgo, 2016). In the case of black women, these experiences are crossed by discriminatory practices that impact self-esteem, identity, access to knowledge, and social participation. Such factors can have repercussions on cognitive, emotional, and educational difficulties in old age, not as a natural result of aging, but as a consequence of trajectories marked by inequality.

Neuropsychopedagogy, by adopting an intersectional perspective, contributes to the understanding of how structural racism and gender inequality affect learning processes and cognitive functioning throughout the life course (Ferreira; Leeson; Melhado, 2019; Hooks, 2005). This approach allows us to analyze, for example, how chronic stress resulting from contexts of exclusion can impact executive functions, memory, attention, and emotional health, fundamental aspects for autonomy and quality of life in old age. In addition, it recognizes that the knowledge built outside the formal spaces of schooling also constitute important forms of learning and should be valued in educational practices aimed at the elderly.

In this sense, neuropsychopedagogical action with elderly black women should be guided by practices that promote cognitive strengthening, the stimulation of lifelong learning, and the appreciation of the identity and history of these women (Freire, 2005; Mbembe, 2018). Interventions that consider their experiences, cultures, memories, and traditional knowledge contribute not only to cognitive development, but also to the strengthening of self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and social participation. Learning, in this context, takes on an emancipatory character, capable of breaking with narratives of invisibility and marginalization associated with old age and blackness.

In addition, neuropsychopedagogy offers important subsidies for the construction of inclusive and anti-racist educational practices, especially in formal and non-formal education spaces for the elderly. By recognizing the singularities of black women, this field contributes

to the development of strategies that respect learning rhythms, promote cognitive stimulation, and favor functional autonomy. Such practices are fundamental for active aging, understood not only as maintenance of physical health, but as social participation, access to knowledge and full exercise of citizenship.

Therefore, establishing a dialogue between the aging of black women and neuropsychopedagogy implies recognizing that old age is a stage of life permeated by possibilities of learning, reconstruction of meanings and appreciation of historically silenced trajectories. By integrating a critical, intersectional perspective committed to social justice, neuropsychopedagogy consolidates itself as a strategic field for the promotion of equity, dignity and quality of life of black women in old age, contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and socially just society.

## 1.1 JUSTIFICATION

Aging is a process marked by biological, cognitive and social transformations, which manifest themselves differently in different population groups. In the case of black women, the impact of structural racism, social inequalities, and gender stereotypes amplifies the challenges faced during old age, affecting both integral health and the possibilities of autonomy and lifelong learning. In this context, neuropsychopedagogy emerges as a significant area of intervention, considering brain plasticity and the interaction between cognitive, emotional and educational processes. Aligning these factors with the understanding of the historical, social, and cultural specificities of elderly black women is essential to build more equitable practices, promoting quality of life and resignification of aging. This article thus seeks to contribute to the scientific debate and to the formulation of inclusive and intersectional strategies in the educational and neuropsychopedagogical field.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

### 1.2.1 General objective

To analyze the relationship between the aging of black women and the contributions of neuropsychopedagogy to promote learning, autonomy and quality of life.

### 1.2.2 Specific objectives

- To investigate the social, cultural and educational impacts on the aging experience of black women.
- To discuss the possibilities of applying neuropsychopedagogy in the support of aging, considering the specificities of this population.

- To relate educational and neuropsychological practices to the promotion of integral health and well-being in old age.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section establishes the conceptual and theoretical bases that support the analysis of the aging of black women and the contribution of neuropsychopedagogy to the promotion of their quality of life. It addresses aging from a multidimensional perspective, the role of intersectionality in the experience of the elderly black woman and the foundations of neuropsychopedagogy as a field of support for continuous learning.

### 2.1 MULTIDIMENSIONAL AGING AND NEURAL PLASTICITY

Aging is a complex biopsychosocial process (De Beauvoir, 2024), which involves biological transformations, such as changes in the nervous system (Cepellos, 2021), but which is not restricted to a decline. Contemporary research emphasizes neural plasticity, that is, the brain's ability to adapt and reorganize functionally throughout life (Lent, 2010), breaking with deficient views of old age (Baltes; Baltes, 1990). From a psychological point of view, aging also manifests itself in resilience and the search for new learning and meaningful activities (Couto et al., 2021; Lopes et al., 2023). Socially, the experience of aging is profoundly influenced by factors such as class, education and access to rights, which determine the well-being of the elderly (Ferreira; Leeson; Melhado, 2019; IBGE, 2023).

### 2.2 INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACK WOMEN IN OLD AGE

Understanding the aging of black women in Brazil requires the application of intersectionality (Akotirene, 2019), an analytical tool that demonstrates how social markers such as race, gender, class, and age are interconnected and reinforce inequalities. Black women experience a unique aging, intensified by structural racism and sexism (Carneiro, 2011; Werneck, 2016), which translate into health challenges, such as chronic stress and a higher risk of disease (Martins; Lima; Santos, 2020; Oraka et al., 2020), and in socioeconomic and educational inequalities (Barbosa; Oliveira; Oliveira, 2024; Almeida; Silva, 2017). The precariousness of professional trajectories (Cacciamali; Hirata, 2005) results in greater vulnerability in old age (Ceccon et al., 2021). However, intersectionality also highlights the resignification of old age and the strengthening of identity through support networks and cultural appreciation, such as Afro-Latin American feminism (Lopes et al., 2023; Gonzalez, 2020). Lélia Gonzalez (1984) and Bell hooks (2005; 2013) underline the importance of recognizing the knowledge and experiences of black women as legitimate forms of

knowledge and resistance.

### 2.3 NEUROPSYCHOPEDAGOGY AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING IN OLD AGE NEUROPSYCHOPEDAGOGY

It is an interdisciplinary field that articulates knowledge from neuroscience, psychology, and pedagogy (Fonseca, 2018; Bossa, 2019) to understand human learning in an integral and contextualized way (Delors, 1998; Japiassu, 2006). Based on neuroscience, it recognizes neural plasticity as the capacity for learning and brain reorganization at any age (Lent, 2010; Kandel et al., 2014), overcoming the idea of cognitive decline inherent to old age. From psychology, it incorporates historical-cultural approaches (Vygotsky, 2007; Bruner, 2001) who see learning as a socially mediated process, and the subjective dimension (González Rey, 2005) that integrates cognition and affectivity. Pedagogically, it is aligned with critical approaches that value previous knowledge and life experiences (Freire, 2005; Charlot, 2000), promoting cognitive strengthening and social participation. Neri (2013) and Neri and Yassuda (2014) highlight the importance of cognitive and social stimulation for integral health in old age. Neuropsychopedagogy, therefore, is positioned as a strategic field for the promotion of continuous learning, dignity and equity in old age, especially for black women.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative approach, of a descriptive and analytical nature, based on bibliographic and documentary research. The methodological objective is to understand how historical, social, cultural, and educational factors impact the aging of black women, influencing their learning processes, cognitive development, autonomy, and integral health. The literature was selected from academic databases, using descriptors related to the topics addressed, focusing on recent studies of relevance to the Brazilian context. The analysis focused on existing works and studies in the scientific literature, seeking to highlight the relationships between racial identity, contexts of vulnerability, educational practices and neuropsychopedagogical dimensions. As this is a bibliographic research, ethical considerations were ensured by the correct citation of the sources. However, the time frame and the exclusivity of the documentary base used are recognized as a limitation, which may not exhaust the totality of scientific production on the subject.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 THE AGING OF BLACK WOMEN: AN INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES

The bibliographic research reveals that the aging of black women in Brazil is a phenomenon crossed by multiple dimensions of inequality, configuring a singular and cumulative experience of exclusion. As pointed out in the literature, structural racism and sexism act in combination, directly impacting the physical and mental health, as well as the social and educational opportunities of these women (Carneiro, 2011; Werneck, 2016). Findings indicate that chronic exposure to gender-based racial microaggressions generates significant stress, associated with higher risks of hypertension, diabetes, and depression (Martins; Lima; Santos, 2020; Oraka et al., 2020).

This reality is also manifested in unequal access to essential services. The literature shows that geographical and financial barriers and institutional prejudices limit black women's access to quality health and education services (Barbosa; Oliveira; Oliveira, 2024; Benedito; Paiva, 2025; Almeida; Silva, 2017). Professional trajectories, often marked by precariousness and low salaries (Cacciamali; Hirata, 2005), culminate in insufficient pensions and greater vulnerability and dependence in old age (Ceccon et al., 2021). These data reinforce the need for an intersectional reading, as proposed by Akotirene (2019), to understand the complexity of accumulated disadvantages.

Despite the challenges, the review demonstrates that many black women find ways to resignify old age and strengthen their identity. Support networks, whether family, community, or religious, emerge as a fundamental pillar for well-being and mental health (Lopes et al., 2023). In addition, the appreciation of Afro-Brazilian culture and history, often driven by Afro-Latin American feminism (Gonzalez, 2020), acts as a powerful instrument of empowerment, allowing the construction of narratives that celebrate historical and everyday figures of resistance. Bell hooks (2005; 2013) complements this view by highlighting how education and the recognition of lived experiences are crucial for the construction of dignity.

### 4.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEUROPSYCHOPEDAGOGY TO QUALITY OF LIFE AND LEARNING

The analysis of the literature highlights the relevance of neuropsychopedagogy as a strategic field to address the aging of black women, offering a perspective that breaks with the view of decline inherent to age. Neuropsychopedagogy, by articulating knowledge from neuroscience, psychology and pedagogy (Fonseca, 2018; Bossa, 2019), understands aging as a dynamic and continuous learning process. This field values brain plasticity (Lent, 2010), arguing that the brain maintains a significant capacity for adaptation and functional

reorganization throughout life, which opens up continuous possibilities for cognitive and emotional development (Kandel et al., 2014; Neri, 2013).

The studies analyzed indicate that neuropsychopedagogical interventions, when based on a critical and intersectional approach, can promote cognitive strengthening and stimulate lifelong learning. They should consider the experiences, cultures, memories and traditional knowledge of these women, as defended by Freire (2005) and Charlot (2000), contributing not only to cognitive development, but also to the strengthening of self-esteem, a sense of belonging and social participation. Learning, in this context, acquires an emancipatory character, capable of challenging narratives of invisibility and marginalization associated with old age and blackness.

Neuropsychopedagogy, by recognizing the singularities of black women, offers subsidies for the construction of inclusive and anti-racist educational practices. By considering how structural racism and gender inequality affect learning processes and cognitive functioning (Ferreira; Leeson; Melhado, 2019), this approach allows strategies that respect learning rhythms, promote cognitive stimulation and favor functional autonomy, as recommended by Neri and Yassuda (2014). Such practices are fundamental for active aging, which goes beyond physical health to include social participation and the full exercise of citizenship.

#### 4.3 CHALLENGES AND PROPOSALS FOR INCLUSIVE NEUROPSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

Despite the potential of neuropsychopedagogy, the research highlights significant barriers to access for older black women. The concentration of specialized services in private spaces and the hegemony of Eurocentric and normative models in evaluations and interventions tend to disregard the experiences and knowledge of the black population, reproducing logics of exclusion (Almeida, 2019; Carneiro, 2005). The absence of professional training that incorporates discussions on structural racism and intersectionality, as suggested by bell hooks (2013), limits the ability of neuropsychopedagogues to act in a truly inclusive way.

In the face of these challenges, the literature points to the need for advances and concrete proposals. A critical review of the epistemological foundations of neuropsychopedagogy is crucial, overcoming deficient approaches and recognizing elderly black women as producers of knowledge (Gonzalez, 1984; Carneiro, 2005). The systematic incorporation of intersectionality into evaluation and intervention practices is indispensable, guiding not only professional actions, but also public policies (Akotirene, 2019).

Proposals include the creation and strengthening of social programs that value the identity and culture of black women, with activities such as conversation circles and memory circles (Lopes; Ribeiro; Oliveira, 2023), and public policies that promote active aging and educational inclusion, with a focus on intersectional care (Benedito; Paiva, 2025; Werneck, 2016). Fostering actions that combine educational inclusion with the rescue of traditional knowledge, transforming them into active agents, is essential to promote equity, dignity and mutual respect.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The theoretical-analytical path developed in this article shows that the aging of black women in Brazil cannot be understood as a homogeneous, linear or strictly biological process. It is a socially constructed experience, marked by multiple nuances that result from the historical articulation between race, gender, class and age. These dimensions operate in an interdependent way, producing structural inequalities that accumulate throughout the course of life and are expressed in an intensified way in old age. Structural racism, sexism, and ageism, when acting together, configure unequal conditions of access to education, health, work, and public policies, directly impacting the autonomy, learning, and quality of life of elderly black women.

Throughout the text, it was demonstrated that the life trajectories of these women are crossed by historical processes of exclusion that are not restricted to the material dimension, but produce profound symbolic, subjective and cognitive effects. The devaluation of their knowledge, the invisibility of their stories and the denial of social recognition constitute forms of violence that affect emotional health and learning processes in old age. Understanding these dynamics requires sensitivity to the nuances that differentiate the experiences of black female aging, avoiding generalizations that obscure the complexity of individual and collective experiences.

In this scenario, neuropsychopedagogy presents itself as a theoretical-practical field of special relevance, as it enables a broader reading of aging, based on the articulation between neuroscience, psychology and pedagogy. By recognizing neural plasticity throughout the life cycle and learning as a continuous, historically situated and socially mediated process, neuropsychopedagogy breaks with reductionist conceptions that associate old age exclusively with cognitive decline. Such an approach allows us to capture the nuances of learning processes in old age, considering not only neurobiological aspects, but also the social, cultural and emotional conditions that cross the trajectories of black women.

In the specific case of older black women, the incorporation of an intersectional perspective becomes indispensable to understand how educational inequalities, limited access to formal schooling, and continuous exposure to contexts of psychosocial stress impact cognitive functioning and learning possibilities. These experiences, marked by multiple nuances throughout life, cannot be interpreted as individual deficits, but as cumulative effects of unequal social structures. Critical neuropsychopedagogy, by recognizing such determinations, contributes to the construction of educational practices that respect the rhythms, cultural repertoires and singularities of these women.

The reflections developed also show that inclusive neuropsychopedagogical practices assume a fundamental ethical and political dimension. By valuing autobiographical memory, orality, ancestry, and knowledge built outside the formal spaces of schooling, such practices recognize elderly black women as knowing subjects and producers of knowledge. This recognition allows us to apprehend the nuances of knowledge built along trajectories marked by resistance, strengthening self-esteem, a sense of belonging and social participation. Learning, in this context, acquires an emancipatory character, articulating cognitive development, identity recognition and full exercise of citizenship.

In the context of public policies, the study points to the need for approaches that consider the nuances of the aging of black women, overcoming generic and disjointed actions. Although there are important legal frameworks in addressing racial and gender inequalities, their effectiveness depends on the incorporation of an intersectional reading that recognizes the specificities of this group throughout the course of life. Education, health, and social assistance policies need to be thought of in an integrated way, ensuring equitable access to cognitive care practices, lifelong learning, and social participation in old age.

Another central aspect refers to the training of professionals who work in the fields of education, health and neuropsychopedagogy. The absence of a critical and anti-racist education compromises the ability to understand the nuances that go through the learning processes in old age and can result in the reproduction of exclusionary practices. Investing in training curricula that incorporate discussions on structural racism, intersectionality, aging, and black epistemologies is a fundamental step towards the consolidation of professional practices committed to equity and social justice.

In view of the above, it is concluded that the articulation between the aging of black women and neuropsychopedagogy significantly expands the understanding of old age, by evidencing its multiple nuances and potentialities. By reaffirming old age as a legitimate stage of learning, production of meanings and appreciation of historically silenced trajectories, this study contributes to the construction of educational practices and public policies that

recognize elderly black women as historical subjects, knowing and holders of socially relevant knowledge. It is, therefore, a matter of affirming a conception of aging committed to human dignity, social justice and the right to learning throughout the course of life.

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