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TEACHER MALAISE: PERCEPTIONS FROM A SCHOOL ON THE PERIPHERY OF GOIÂNIA

O MAL-ESTAR DOCENTE: PERCEPÇÕES A PARTIR DE UMA ESCOLA DA PERIFERIA DE GOIÂNIA

EL MALESTAR DOCENTE: PERCEPCIONES DESDE UNA ESCUELA DE LA PERIFERIA DE GOIÂNIA

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ABSTRACT: The main objective of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of the work environment and its impact on professional well-being. The research combines a quantitative analysis, which profiles the participants through objective questions, with a qualitative analysis based on subjective questions that explore sources of stress and motivations. The theoretical framework is based on a literature review that classifies studies into three approaches: traditional, critical, and post-critical, providing a comprehensive view of contemporary educational dynamics. The results reveal that work overload and lack of institutional support are predominant stress factors, while support among colleagues emerges as a significant motivating element. The implications of this research suggest the urgency of policies that prioritize mental health and support for

teachers, aiming at creating a more balanced and productive educational environment.

KEYWORDS: Perception of the work environment. Teacher discomfort. Professional overload. School Psychology.

RESUMO: O objetivo central deste trabalho foi investigar as percepções dos professores sobre o ambiente de trabalho e seu impacto no bem-estar profissional. A pesquisa combina uma análise quantitativa, que traça o perfil dos participantes por meio de questões objetivas, com uma análise qualitativa baseada em perguntas subjetivas semiestruturadas que exploram fontes de estresse e motivações. O referencial teórico é fundamentado em uma revisão de literatura que classifica os estudos em três abordagens: tradicional, crítica e pós-crítica, proporcionando uma visão abrangente das dinâmicas educacionais contemporâneas. Os resultados revelam que a sobrecarga de trabalho e a falta de apoio institucional são fatores predominantes de estresse, enquanto o suporte entre colegas emerge como um elemento motivador significativo. As implicações desta pesquisa sugerem a urgência de políticas que priorizem a saúde mental e o suporte aos docentes, visando a criação de um ambiente educacional mais equilibrado e produtivo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Percepção do ambiente de trabalho. Mal-estar docente. Sobrecarga profissional. Psicologia Escolar.

RESUMEN: El objetivo central de este trabajo fue investigar las percepciones de los profesores sobre el ambiente de trabajo y su impacto en el bienestar profesional. La investigación combina un análisis cuantitativo, que traza el perfil de los participantes a través de preguntas objetivas, con un análisis cualitativo basado en preguntas subjetivas semiestructuradas que exploran fuentes de estrés y motivaciones. El marco teórico se fundamenta en una revisión de la literatura que clasifica los estudios en tres enfoques: tradicional, crítico y poscrítico, proporcionando una visión integral de las dinámicas educativas contemporáneas. Los resultados revelan que la sobrecarga de trabajo y la falta de apoyo institucional son factores predominantes de estrés, mientras que el apoyo entre colegas emerge como un elemento motivador significativo. Las implicaciones de esta investigación sugieren la urgencia de políticas que prioricen la salud mental y el apoyo a los docentes, con el objetivo de crear un entorno educativo más equilibrado y productivo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Percepción del ambiente de trabajo. Malestar docente. Sobrecarga profesional. Psicología Escolar.

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher malaise has been researched in Brazil for several decades, addressing issues related to psychological, physical, social, and academic aspects, mainly in the areas of psychology and education. During the 1980s and 1990s, studies in the educational field pointed out that the main challenges and difficulties in education were centered on the students, since the focus of the educational process was directed at them. However, the need to consider the role of the teacher and further research into the issues that affect them has become evident (Kasper & Rinaldi, 2017).

As a result, research into teaching practice gained prominence, especially in Europe, where discussions began to emerge about the various adversities faced by teachers, reflecting a decline in the attractiveness of the profession. As a result, the figure of teachers and their pedagogical practices began to receive greater attention from researchers (André, 2010; Cunha, 2013; Diniz-Pereira, 2013; Rinaldi, 2016). Debates about teacher dissatisfaction, working conditions, workload, and pay have become more frequent. However, it was only in the 1990s that these debates intensified, bringing to light factors that contributed to the growing discouragement of the teaching profession.

Several examples of work can be seen in the discussion of the subject, such as the work carried out by Barasuol (2004), who investigated teacher burnout in the context of the inclusion of students with special educational needs, and Bock (2004), who analyzed Burnout Syndrome at work in special education based on the perceptions of educators. In addition, Prioste (2006) dealt with diversity and adversity in the educational environment, while Bonfim (2008) discussed listening in inclusive schools and its implications for teacher malaise. In turn, Levy (2011) developed a Burnout Syndrome coping program and evaluated its effects on teachers working in the inclusion process, while Lázaro (2013) investigated the relationship between teaching work and the self-perceived health of teachers at special education teaching centers in Maranhão. Mercado (2016) also contributes to this discussion by studying the identities of special education teachers in the context of Maceió, Alagoas.

This study is based on the following research question: how do teachers at a school on the outskirts of Goiânia perceive their working environment, and how does this impact their malaise? In an attempt to answer this research question, the general objective was to analyze how teachers perceive their working environment and the effects of this perception on their malaise.

In order to achieve this goal, a number of specific objectives were set that sought to understand the complexity of this phenomenon. Firstly, a literature review was carried out, which provided the theoretical elements needed to construct the topic. In addition, the study sought to identify the main factors they considered when evaluating their work environment,

as well as to assess the relationship between the perception of the work environment and teachers' levels of stress and job satisfaction. The analysis of these variables made it possible to explore how the conditions of the school environment influenced the professional performance of educators, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the interactions that took place in this context.

To this end, five hypotheses were formulated to guide the research. These hypotheses were constructed by reading the articles chosen to form the theoretical framework of this study. The first hypothesis (H1) suggests that a negative perception of the work environment is associated with higher levels of stress and lower job satisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2014; Rezende et al., 2021). The second hypothesis (H2) posits that improvements in infrastructure and institutional support can lead to a more favorable perception of working conditions (Cavalcante, 2023; Sguíssardi, 2015).

The third hypothesis (H3) points out that teachers in urban peripheries face greater school violence, which increases the perception of insecurity and stress (Damascena & Vale, 2020; Derisso & Duarte, 2017). The fourth hypothesis (H4) highlights that black teachers experience more stress and dissatisfaction due to racial and gender discrimination (Rinaldi, 2016; Silva, 2024). Finally, the fifth hypothesis (H5) suggests that teachers from working-class backgrounds perceive difficulties more intensely in schools with low socioeconomic prestige, which contributes to high levels of stress and dissatisfaction (Alvarado-Prada, 2010; Prioste, 2006).

These objectives and hypotheses seek not only to map the reality experienced by teachers, but also to provide support for the formulation of educational policies that promote a healthier and more productive working environment.

The justification for this work is based on the growing incidence of teacher malaise, an alarming phenomenon that impacts not only teachers' mental, physical, and social health but also the quality of education in schools. The related symptoms, such as stress, emotional exhaustion, demotivation, and health problems, highlight the urgent need to understand the underlying causes of this condition. This becomes even more relevant in a context where educators deal with long working hours, excessive responsibilities, and a considerable lack of institutional support. Emotional overload and the pressure to meet teaching targets, combined with unfavorable working conditions, have led to serious disorders such as burnout syndrome, which not only affect teachers' health, but also compromise the school environment as a whole (Barasuol, 2004; Bock, 2004; Levy, 2011; Prioste, 2006).

In addition, the scarcity of research that goes into the analysis of teacher malaise and its implications makes this investigation even more necessary. By exploring the relationship between working conditions and teachers' health, this study aims not only to provide a deeper understanding of the problem, but also to support the formulation of more effective educational policies. These policies are essential to promote the appreciation of education

professionals and guarantee the well-being of teachers, which are fundamental elements for building quality education. Therefore, this research is justified by the urgent need to address and mitigate the factors that contribute to teacher malaise, thus ensuring a healthier school environment that is conducive to learning.

METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out in two separate stages. Initially, we searched for articles in Portuguese using the SciELO Platform, which was chosen as the index for its wide coverage in Brazil and the possibility of accessing publications from different countries and continents. The keyword “teacher malaise” (without quotation marks) was used in the search without imposing time restrictions, covering the entire period available in the database. With this strategy, 20 articles were identified, which were manually screened based on the criteria of relevance to the topic. After selection, 16 articles were considered suitable for review. In order to analyze the articles, we systematically read their content and, using Discursive Textual Analysis (Moraes & Galiuzzi, 2006), we tried to carry out the intended classification.

Secondly, we opted for empirical research, which will be detailed in the following sections.

Subjects

The research was carried out with 10 teachers from Colégio Alfa, located in a peripheral¹⁰ region of the city of Goiânia/GO, covering different levels of education (from the 1st to the 9th year of elementary school). The sample was selected randomly to ensure representativeness.

Interview instruments and conduct

The interviews were conducted in person and in confidence. This instrument was the main tool for collecting empirical data in the fieldwork. This methodology made it possible to obtain information about educators’ perceptions and experiences in the workplace on an individual basis. Each interview lasted an average of 10 to 15 minutes.

¹⁰ As discussed by Garcia-Silva, Lima Junior, and Haydée Caruso (2022), the authors recognize that the category “periphery” involves a complex theoretical and political debate, which, for reasons of the focus of the study, will not be explored in depth in the text. Even so, the complexity of the term is maintained to discuss possible relationships between teacher malaise and the geography of the city, addressing: a) the degree of remoteness of the areas in relation to the urban center; and b) the social and symbolic dimensions of the populations of these territories, often seen as economically, politically and socially disadvantaged.

Data Collection Procedures

As a research script, 22 questions were formulated for data collection (16 objective and 6 subjective), aimed at investigating the main factors that influence teachers' malaise in the school environment. The questions were designed based on the literature review, seeking to capture the participant's perception of their working conditions, physical and emotional health, as well as aspects related to gender, race/color, and institutional support.

Data Analysis Procedures

For the analysis, we used two approaches: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach was applied to multiple-choice and objective questions, with the aim of providing a statistical overview of the participants' profiles and responses, making it easier to identify trends and patterns.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews was conducted through semi-structured questions, using techniques of coding, categorization, and identification of main themes based on Textual Discourse Analysis (Moraes & Galiuzzi, 2006).

Literature Review: Reading Teaching Malaise in Brazilian Journals

The themes identified from the survey results are shown in Table 1. It can be seen that 7 articles deal with traditional theory, 2 articles deal with critical education, and 7 articles refer to post-critical theory. This volume of articles suggests that there is a predominance of concerns with issues of gender, color, and identity, to the detriment of class relations and the imperatives of social justice. Analysis of the articles also reveals that traditional theory is a topic frequently investigated by researchers.

Table 1: Categories of analysis

AUTHORS	TEORIA TRADICIONAL	CRITICAL THEORY	POST-CRITICS
Barasuol (2004), Bock (2004), Rezende et al. (2021), Levy (2011), Bonfim (2008), Prioste (2006), Pereira (2011)	They investigate symptoms of teacher malaise, such as burnout, stress, and exhaustion, and their implications for teachers' health and the quality of teaching.	-	-
Cunha et al. (2024), Camargo and Dworak (2019)	-	They focus on issues of work, the class system, the precarious conditions of teaching work, and their implications for teachers' health and satisfaction.	-
Traldi et al. (2024), Brito et al. (2014), Pereira (2016), Mercado (2016), Morandini and Gomide Júnior (2022), Abreu et al. (2023) Silva (2024).	-	-	They explored identity, difference, subjectivity, issues of power, gender, race/color, recognition, and their implications for teaching careers.

Source: elaborated by the authors (2024).

However, one caveat must be made. The distinction between the three categories pointed out by Silva (1999) (traditional, critical, and post-critical) is limited and simplified, as it groups together different perspectives that are not always recognized as similar. The idea of a succession of these approaches can create the illusion of linear progress, disregarding important issues such as class, which remain influential even when invisible.

And, without claiming to exhaust the discussions on theoretical classifications, the authors of this text recognize that the boundaries between different approaches are often fragile, especially when trying to fit significant contributions from Psychology, Education, and Social Sciences into narrow categories. This complexity shows that the theoretical field is often a space of dispute and lack of consensus. This paper seeks to go beyond empirical research, offering a theoretical contribution that dialogues with these tensions and broadens the understanding of the subject, recognizing the plurality of perspectives and the need for a more flexible and integrative approach.

In order to organize this diversity of approaches, we propose a classification of the articles into three meta-theoretical categories based on Silva's (2009) theory of the curriculum, namely: (a) Symptoms of teacher malaise and Traditional Theory, (b) Work and Critical Theory and (c) Subjectivity and Post-Criticism.

Symptoms of teacher malaise and Traditional Theory

The Traditional Theory in Education emphasizes efficiency in teaching and learning, using technical innovations to optimize educational processes and minimize costs (Garcia-Silva & Lima

Junior, 2020). However, this approach does not address social inequalities, treating the curriculum as neutral and hiding the underlying political interests. Influential authors from this tradition, such as Bobbitt and Tyler, defend an education that meets the demands of industrial society, perpetuating themselves in science education research in an ill-considered way. Thus, for the intended classification, it is understood that works that only evoke the symptoms of teacher malaise, without necessarily looking at its causes, would fall within this analytical spectrum.

In this context, teacher malaise is analyzed mainly through symptoms such as stress, dissatisfaction, and burnout, which affect both the mental and physical health of teachers and the quality of teaching. Rezende et al. (2021) point out that teacher malaise is a multifaceted problem that includes psychological, physical, social, and academic aspects. Barasuol (2004), for example, investigated teacher burnout in the context of the inclusion of students with special educational needs, revealing that the additional pressure of adapting pedagogical practices to cater to these students can aggravate teacher burnout. Similarly, Bock (2004) analyzed Burnout Syndrome at work in special education, highlighting how educators' perceptions of their working conditions influence their well-being.

Other studies also contribute to this discussion: Prioste (2006) dealt with diversity and adversity in the educational environment, while Bonfim (2008) discussed listening in inclusive schools and its implications for teacher malaise. Levy (2011) developed a Burnout Syndrome coping program and evaluated its effects on teachers working in the inclusion process, highlighting the importance of interventions that offer emotional and strategic support to teachers. Pereira (2016), on the other hand, offers an analysis from a psychoanalytic perspective, addressing the difficulties faced by teachers in exercising their profession. The author proposes that teacher malaise is closely linked to the lack of recognition and the impact of working conditions on the subjectivity of educators.

Work and Critical Theory

Critical theory, developed in the 1970s and influenced by the Frankfurt School and authors such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, and Jürgen Habermas, analyzes how the work environment and institutional dynamics affect teachers' health and satisfaction. This critical perspective emerged in education in a context of crisis in liberal capitalist economies, marked by growing social inequalities and poverty. Thinkers such as Paulo Freire, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michael Apple stand out for denouncing the role of schools in reproducing social inequalities and injustices (Garcia-Silva & Lima Junior, 2020).

Cunha et al. (2024), for example, in their study *Vivências, Condições de Trabalho e Processo Saúde-Doença: Retratos da Realidade Docente* (Experiences, Working Conditions and

the Health-Disease Process: Portraits of the Teaching Reality), analyze the working conditions of public basic education teachers in Brazil, highlighting the impacts of the educational reforms of the 1990s, which were influenced by neoliberal policies. These reforms have resulted in the precariousness of teaching work, characterized by exhausting working hours, lack of resources, and devaluation of the profession.

Teachers' reports indicate that the demands of the job have led to serious health problems, such as physical and mental illness, as well as negatively affecting their personal and family lives. Many teachers face difficulties in reconciling their professional obligations with self-care and leisure time, leading to a cycle of illness and dissatisfaction (Cunha et al., 2024). In addition, the survey highlights the responsibility that falls on teachers to buy materials and food for their pupils, highlighting the lack of support from the state. Finally, the study suggests the need to re-evaluate educational policies and implement measures to promote better working conditions and value teaching careers with a view to teachers' health and well-being.

Silva (2024) emphasizes that the inclusion of students with different types of disabilities and specific needs requires personalized planning, which often goes beyond the initial training of teachers. Without technical support, adequate resources, and well-defined inclusive strategies, teachers can feel isolated and overwhelmed, which aggravates the malaise and negatively impacts the school environment. Still, on the subject of the school environment, Camargo and Dworak (2019) stress the importance of workspaces that not only minimize stress factors but also foster an environment conducive to teaching and learning. According to the authors, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of institutional support are factors that contribute to increased malaise among teachers, negatively impacting their motivation, performance, and psychological state. Pereira (2011) complements this discussion by highlighting how working conditions and the social environment directly affect teachers' perceptions of their workplace.

Subjectivity and the Post-Critical

Post-critical theory encompasses a variety of perspectives that, while opposing traditional education, also criticize the critical approach for its generalizations. Influenced by thinkers such as Foucault, Butler, and Derrida, Post-critical Education focuses on identity, subjectivity, and power, which are not centralized in the state or social class, but dispersed in society. This approach goes beyond economic and justice issues, recognizing power as a complex network of relationships. Gender and race/color issues are especially important (Garcia-Silva & Lima Junior, 2020).

In this sense, Brito et al. (2014), in *Saúde, gênero e reconhecimento no trabalho das professoras: convergências e diferenças no Brasil e na França* (Health, gender and recognition in the work of female teachers: convergences and differences in Brazil and France), explore the relationship between health and work, highlighting the importance of recognition and collec-

tive work processes in promoting teachers' health. The study presents a literature review that highlights the challenges faced by teachers in Brazil, France, and internationally, with a focus on the devaluation of the profession, violence in the school environment, and stress.

Traldi et al. (2024) deepen the discussion on the intersection of gender and race/color, addressing the impact of racism and gender inequalities on the careers of black teachers. The research reveals that the academic environment is racially stratified, characterized by racial and gender hierarchies, which has serious implications for the careers and malaise of black teachers. These professionals face multiple challenges, such as the double bias of racial and gender discrimination, especially black female teachers. During the pandemic, for example, female professors with young children were the most affected, with a significant decrease in academic production and article submissions, highlighting inequalities in the academic environment.

Abreu et al. (2023) investigate the relationship between the internationalization of public education policies and the malaise experienced by elementary school teachers in Brazil. In addition, Pereira (2016) suggests that a more subjective and individualized approach is essential to understanding and intervening in teachers' realities, going beyond quantitative generalizations. Finally, Morandini and Gomide Júnior (2022) point out that the analysis of teacher malaise can make significant contributions to improving educational practices and institutional policies, helping to create healthier and more productive working environments.

Data Analysis

In this space, we will outline the teachers' perceptions found in the field research in its two areas of investigation, as noted separately below.

Quantitative Analysis

In general, the data from the objective questions was grouped together, allowing for a better understanding of the participants' profiles. Although the sample size limits statistical significance, the results obtained are in line with those previously reported in the descriptive literature on the subject.

In this sense, the majority of educators are between 20 and 30 years old (60%), showing a relatively young group, possibly at the start of their careers. Marital status reveals that 80% of the participants are married, which may influence their perspective on work and family life. With regard to paternity and maternity, 70% of educators have children; of these, three respondents said they had two children. This condition can influence their routines and the way they manage professional demands, as discussed by Francklin (2018), who points out that family life and the work environment need to be considered in management policies.

With regard to training and professional experience, all the participants have higher education, and 50% of them have a specialization, which indicates a commitment to professional qualification, as suggested by Alvarado-Prada (2010) and Araújo (2024) when they highlight the importance of continuing training in overcoming educational difficulties. Most of the participants have been working at the institution for between 1 and 3 years, and 20% have more than 10 years' experience, providing a mix of new and veteran professionals in the school environment. The predominant area of training is Pedagogy (50%), followed by Literature and Psychology, reflecting the diversity of specializations that make up the teaching team. The significant variation in time since training, ranging from less than a year to up to 17 years, highlights the wealth of experience that these educators bring to the institution, influencing both their teaching practice and their interaction with students and the school community.

Considering gender, race, and social class, only one man took part in the questionnaire, while nine interviewees were women. Six participants declared themselves white, and four, grayish-brown. With regard to social class and from the perspective of their perceptions, five participants identified themselves as belonging to the "middle class," while the others belonged to the working classes, as defined by Bourdieu (1979). This scenario is in line with the analyses of Sguíssardi (2015) and Derisso and Duarte (2017), who highlight the impact of social inequalities on educational experiences and the perception of the role of teachers.

The answers to the question about the perception of the school's location (whether on the outskirts or in an affluent area) and its impact on the school environment and teacher unrest showed different views among the participants. The majority consider that location has a significant influence, with six interviewees stating that it "often influences" or "always influences" the school environment. This highlights that the socioeconomic and territorial context can affect both school dynamics and teachers' working conditions, as observed by Damascena and Vale (2020), who emphasize the structural challenges faced in schools in peripheral regions.

On the other hand, two interviewees shared that location "rarely influences," and one said that it "never influences," indicating that internal factors such as management and pedagogical policies are more relevant for them. Those who mentioned that location "sometimes influences," "always influences," and "often influences" confirm that the territorial context is important but not decisive. Overall, the predominance of responses pointing to frequent influence suggests a criticism of the reality of schools in peripheral areas, which face additional challenges such as lack of infrastructure and social vulnerability, impacting teachers' motivation and well-being. These findings converge with the critique of neoliberalism discussed by Derisso and Duarte (2017), who point out how economic policies have intensified educational inequality and how the contexts of social vulnerability are a reflection of these policies.

With regard to the responses on the use of medication, the survey reveals a diversity of practices among the participants. While four said they had never used medication, three

mentioned that they use it “sometimes,” and another three indicated that it is “often” part of their routine. This variation suggests that the relationship between health and well-being is complex and can be linked to different factors, such as stress levels, working conditions, and individual perception of the need for treatment, as analyzed by Cavalcante (2023) and Ferreira *et al.* (2024), who highlight the relationship between well-being and institutional support in the educational context. The fact that a significant proportion of those interviewed reported frequent use of medication may indicate the presence of emotional or physical challenges associated with teaching, highlighting the importance of policies to support educators’ mental health and well-being.

Quantitative Analysis

Main Sources of Stress in Educators Work

The educators’ responses point to a variety of factors that contribute significantly to stress in the school environment. One of the most recurrent elements mentioned is the excessive workload, which translates into pressure to meet specific deadlines for the delivery of plans and assessments, combined with the need to take a large number of tasks home (Interviewee No. 4).

The reality of teacher overload is discussed by Francklin (2018) and Ferreira *et al.* (2014), who addresses the need to compensate for the weakened educational structure. This reality is intensified by the presence of overcrowded classrooms, where the difficulty of meeting the individual needs of each student is a constant challenge. Students’ lack of commitment and general disinterest in learning accentuate this pressure, generating a cycle of frustration that directly impacts motivation and the quality of teaching, especially as they realize that their work does not lead to relevant social changes based on education.

Impact of the Work Environment on Educators Motivation and Job Satisfaction

The educators’ responses revealed a twofold panorama in relation to the impact of the work environment on their motivation and job satisfaction. Teachers who face constant pressure and challenges, such as lack of institutional support or work overload, report a gradual loss of passion, as analyzed by Ferreira *et al.* (2014), who discuss the precariousness of teaching work and its implications.

However, positive experiences in the school environment, such as those reported by many educators and characterized by friendship and support from management, are seen as elements that can mitigate the effects of professional exhaustion and contribute to a collaborative and motivating environment (Interviewees No. 2, 3, 4 and 5).

Improvements in School Administration to Promote a Healthy Working Environment for Teachers

As indicated by the teachers, a recurring need in the responses is the search for additional support, especially with regard to making the deadlines for the completion and delivery of pedagogical demands more flexible (Interviewees No. 1 and 2). Many educators expressed frustration at the difficulty of the deadlines, which often don't take into account the accumulated workload and the complexity of the activities involved. This perspective is in line with the analysis of Sguíssardi (2015), Cavalcante (2023), and Ferreira et al. (2014), who reinforce the need for adequate institutional support and management practices that respect the complexity of teaching work.

Strategies for Coping with Stress and Difficulties in Teaching Work

The educators' answers to the question about how they deal with the stress and difficulties associated with their work reveal a diversity of strategies and approaches that seek to soften the emotional impact of teaching demands (Interviewees No. 2 and 3). The practice of physical activities and the development of an active social life, mentioned by some interviewees, are examples of self-care that can be encouraged by educational policies, as suggested by Cavalcante (2023) and Araújo (2024), who highlight the importance of educators' emotional well-being for effective teaching practice.

The Influence of Gender, Race, and Social Class on the Working Environment of Educators

The educators' answers to the question about the influence of gender, race or social class on their experiences in the workplace reflect a diverse spectrum of perceptions and implications. While the majority of interviewees do not perceive a direct influence from these factors, the analysis by Sguíssardi (2015) and Derisso and Duarte (2017) suggests that social inequalities and working conditions have a significant impact on teaching experiences, even if they are not always directly recognized by professionals.

In addition, some answers expressed frustration at the lack of institutional support, mentioning that those who should be concerned about the well-being of educators do not show enough interest. This "disconnect between theory and practice" (Interviewee No. 10) shows that, even when educators do not explicitly identify the influence of gender, race, or social class, the work environment still suffers from the absence of policies that take these specificities into account. This gap exacerbates the challenges faced by women, blacks, and working-class people, who already deal with structural discrimination, deepening inequalities and contributing to a scenario of greater precariousness in their working conditions.

Therefore, even if educators try to maintain a stance of autonomy and strength in the face of adversity, the lack of institutional recognition and support can lead to a malaise that transcends individual issues, requiring critical reflection on management practices and the construction of a school environment that truly values and considers educators' needs.

In short, the results presented in this qualitative analysis are in line with the literature, as evidenced by the study by Francklin (2018), who discusses the management shock and the need to compensate for the educational structure, especially in the face of teacher precariousness, emphasized by authors such as Damascena and Vale (2020) and Ferreira et al. (2014). This precariousness reveals the lack of support and resources, directly affecting the quality of education, which highlights the importance of continuing training, as proposed by Alvarado-Prada (2010) and Araújo (2024). In this sense, the critique of neoliberalism, addressed by Derisso and Duarte (2017) and Sguissardi (2015), questions policies that commodify education, exacerbating the challenges faced by educators. Finally, the considerations about teaching needs discussed by Cavalcante (2023) and Ferreira et al. (2014) showed an urgent demand for institutional support and professional development, creating a scenario that calls for profound reforms. Next, we will discuss the implications of these results.

Implications

Based on the data found, the implications for education are diverse and cover aspects of school management and support for educators, directly affecting the quality of teaching. The teachers' working environment reflects the contradictions of an educational system that prioritizes targets and results to the detriment of teachers' working conditions.

Precarious working conditions, such as lack of resources, overload of activities, and lack of institutional support, can increase stress levels and reduce teachers' job satisfaction, compromising their motivation and performance (Barasuol, 2004; Prioste, 2006). In addition, difficulties faced in everyday school life, such as inadequate infrastructure and students' socioeconomic challenges, limit teachers' ability to plan and implement effective pedagogical practices, negatively impacting the quality of teaching (Bock, 2004; Levy, 2011).

In addition, the relationship between working conditions and the quality of teaching is revealed in the ability of teachers to meet pedagogical demands and create an effective learning environment. When subjected to adverse conditions, such as insufficient infrastructure, excessive responsibilities, and lack of institutional support, teachers face difficulties in adapting their practices to the needs of students, which compromises both engagement and educational results (Bock, 2004; Prioste, 2006).

Furthermore, the overload of work and the lack of institutional support show that the

reality of educators is marked by a structure that treats teachers as parts of a system without considering their emotional and professional needs. This situation contributes to the alienation of teachers, who often find themselves demotivated and disconnected from the educational process, pressured to meet demands without any genuine concern for their well-being (Francklin, 2018; Silva, 2019). The intensification of precarious teaching work, described by insecure salaries and a lack of institutional support, exacerbates this situation, leading to a cycle of demotivation and dissatisfaction (Castro Neta et al., 2020; Silva, 2019).

In addition, the reports on the lack of family support in the teaching process and the lack of infrastructure in schools show that educators are individually responsible for issues that are actually structural in nature. The lack of family involvement, for example, should not just be a problem for teachers, but a social issue that reflects wider inequalities (Alvarado-Prada et al., 2010; Miranda et al., 2018).

However, in the school context, this responsibility falls on educators, increasing the pressure on them even more. The precariousness of teaching work, characterized by insecure salaries and a lack of institutional support, aggravates this situation, leading to a cycle of demotivation and dissatisfaction (Francklin, 2018; Silva, 2019).

In short, the scenario described reveals a dynamic in which the human needs of educators are often disregarded in favor of maintaining a productivist structure, which sees education more as a mechanism for training labor than a genuine process of social transformation. This critical approach shows that possible changes to improve the quality of education must include reflection on the working conditions of educators and the role of schools in society (Castro Neta et al., 2020; Derisso & Duarte, 2017). Continuous training and institutional support are fundamental for educators to feel valued and engaged, thus contributing to a healthier and more productive educational environment (Alvarado-Prada et al., 2010; Cavalcante, 2023; Miranda et al., 2018).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their working environment and how these perceptions can impact their well-being. Throughout the research, the challenges faced by teachers were explored, including precarious working conditions, the overload of activities, and the pressure to meet increasingly complex demands, such as the need for continuing training.

The data collected and analyzed revealed that teachers often feel undervalued, facing a lack of resources and institutional support. These factors contribute to an unfavorable working environment, which can lead to professional malaise. The study also highlighted that the pres-

sure for results and the lack of autonomy in teaching practices are elements that have a negative impact on the experience of teachers, making it difficult to carry out quality work.

At the end of the study, it was observed that only hypothesis H4—which states that teachers, especially black teachers, experience higher levels of stress and professional dissatisfaction due to a work environment marked by racial and gender discrimination, lack of recognition, and unequal working conditions compared to their peers—was not sufficiently corroborated by the data. Most responses indicated that teachers did not attribute stress and professional dissatisfaction levels to racial and gender discrimination, lack of recognition, or unequal working conditions. Many of the respondents say that such situations don't interfere with their perception of their work, highlighting other factors such as financial need or their professional attitude in the face of difficulties.

The contemporary educational context, characterized by a constant search for efficiency and productivity, imposes additional challenges on teachers. This can result in a significant emotional burden, directly influencing these professionals' motivation and engagement. The research points to the importance of public policies and institutional initiatives that offer adequate support, with a view to improving teachers' working conditions and valuing the profession.

In view of this, the implications of this research for the formulation of educational policies are clear. Valuing teachers must go beyond salary adjustments and also include improvements in working conditions, emotional support, and actions to tackle gender and racial discrimination in the school environment. Such measures are fundamental to ensuring a more welcoming working environment that recognizes teachers' needs and values their contribution to the development of education.

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