

## Subjective mobilization of teaching work, the impacts generated by the Covid-19 pandemic: An approach to psychodynamics



<https://doi.org/10.56238/uniknowindevolp-046>

### Roseli Vieira Pires

Doctor in Psychology – PUC-GO; Postdoctoral Internship in Psychology - PUC-GO; Postdoctoral Internship in Geography - UFG; Master in Administration - FACECA-MG; Graduated in Business Administration and Accounting Sciences - UCG. Professor at the State University of Goiás, Professor of the Aphonsian Colleges.

### Suelma Rodrigues Duarte

Master's student in Management, Education and Technology – UEG-GO; MBA in Marketing – UCAM-RJ; Graduated in Business Administration – Univero-RJ; Professor at the State University of Goiás; Professor at the University Center of Goiás – UNIGOIÁS-GO.

### Rodrigo Corrêa Pires

Master in Law – UFG, Graduation in Law – Faculdades Aphonsiano; University Professor – FACIES.

### ABSTRACT

The objective is to answer how higher education teachers in the municipality of Porangatu, Goiás experience defensive and coping strategies in the exercise of their functions during the COVID-19 pandemic. It contains a brief history of education in Brazil, the psychodynamics of work and subjective mobilization. It uses the methodology of the Psychodynamics of Work with collective discussions. As a result, it is expected to know the experiences of the teachers.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Psychodynamics of Work, Covid-19.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the year 2019, the world was surprised by the Coronavirus (SARS-COV-2). Due to the high contagion content and no vaccine, the medical recommendation involved social isolation, mask wearing and hand hygiene as a protective measure. At the beginning of 2020, Brazil already recorded the first death. The isolation has brought difficulties to all sectors, including education.

In the pandemic context, the teaching practice, which was already undergoing transformations as a result of globalization, required an adaptation immersed in intense organizational, social, personal and even student pressure for the adoption of new technologies and tools in the production of content and in the classroom conduction.

The social ideology in which the teacher is a professional who works with love, for love and for pleasure are opposed to some situations that generate fear, insecurity, frustration and many other feelings of negative charge. It is based on this opposition that the desire to study the subjective mobilization of teaching work arises, here too, considering the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. This strand guides the problem question of this study: how do higher education teachers in the municipality of Porangatu, Goiás experience defensive and coping strategies in the exercise of their functions during the COVID-19 pandemic?



Based on the Psychodynamics of work, this study hopes to know the experiences of teachers about subjective mobilization and coping with adverse situations. It is in the context of the Psychodynamics of work, under the aegis of studies on subjective mobilizations, the analysis of the meaning attributed to work by teachers, the analysis of the rates of illness of teachers of higher education in the Municipality of Porangatu – Goiás to establish the relationship between experiences of pleasure, suffering and leisure in an organizational context of teaching.

## 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

### 2.1 TEACHING WORK

For Hamze (2013), teaching professionals have a fundamental role in education and in the process of transformation of society. Being a teacher is not just about teaching; Their performance is also a cultural and social exercise.

Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Brasil, 2017), official education in Brazil began on October 15, 1827, with an imperial decree of D. Pedro I, which determined that "all cities had their schools of first letters." However, access to education was still very restricted at the time of the Empire. Only wealthy families could afford to hire teachers to educate their children. The professionals either worked in private schools or sold knowledge independently (BRASIL, 2017). Only from the 1930s, with the emergence of school groups, was that free public education began to organize and serve more students. Then, the public power began to take effective responsibility for the education of children. Thus, there was an expansion of school groups and the first schools of higher education of teachers in undergraduate degrees emerged.

In this sense, Hamze (2013) states that the training of educators is not based only on technical rationality, they act as executors of other people's decisions, forming citizens with competence, skills and ability to decide for a better country. This scenario, Freitas (2013, p. 46) cites that the teaching work reflects, in their health, the changes in the context of work, allied to the new models of education in Brazil and that affected the working conditions of this professional, especially regarding his "work overload and social devaluation that compromises the physical and psychological health of these professionals".

### 2.2 PSYCHODYNAMICS OF WORK

Mendes (1999), states that the Psychodynamics of Work has as its focus of study the relations between work organization and the subjective mobilizations of the worker, which are manifested in the experiences of pleasure-suffering, in coping strategies to mediate suffering, in social pathologies, in health and illness.



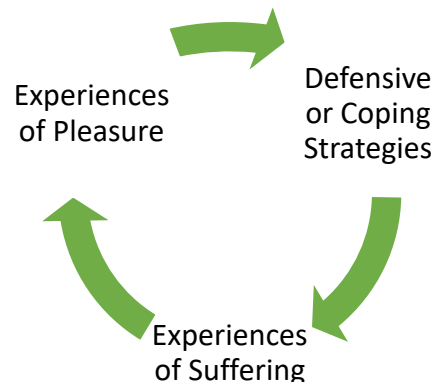
The work needs to make sense to the subject himself and to society. For Dejours (1987), the meaning of work is formed by two components: the significant content in relation to the *subject* and the significant content in relation to the *object*. For the Psychodynamics of Work the The sense of work allows the construction of personal and social identity allowing the consideration of a desirable future, including professional development activities.

According to Dejours (1987), the categories of Psychodynamics of Work are organized into two categories: the organization of work comprises: working conditions and labor relations and subjective mobilization.

### 2.2.1 Subjective Mobilization of the Worker

The category Subjective Mobilization of the Worker is organized into three pillars: experiences of pleasure, experiences of suffering and defensive or coping strategies, in this context discussed separately. The categories of subjective mobilization of the worker (figure 1) make it possible to perceive the experiences of the worker in relation to each category and what strategies these workers use.

Figure 1 – Category: subjective mobilization of the worker



Source: developed by the authors.

According to Dejours (1994; 1999), subjective mobilization is defined as a process characterized using the worker's psychological resources and by the public space for discussions about work. For Dejours (1994; 1999), the process of subjective mobilization is not prescribed; it is experienced by each worker. It is noteworthy that this mobilization is fundamental in the process of managing the organization of work, as it avoids the use of defensive strategies or psychopathological decompensation. Thus, the activities performed by the worker in his daily life are constituted within the plane of subjectivity, in which he uses his body and his intelligence to assist him in the process of production at work.



In this perspective, an experience arises in each worker not necessarily of pain, but of suffering, something specific to each human being in the work he performs. In this process, the worker also performs the modification, the transformation and, often, the euphemization of the perception of everything that at work makes him suffer, being the mobilization at physical and intellectual levels the main actions sought by him.

Suffering increases as the rigidity and division of labor increases and decreases the significant content of it. In this case, [...] frustrations [...] can be a source of great adaptation efforts. This adaptation can occur based on the use of collective defenses (DEJOURS, 1992, p. 52).

To define experiences of suffering, Hernandez (2003) argues that work can be a source of balance, if it allows the reduction of the psychic load of the subjects, or of fatigue, if it contributes to an increase in the psychic load, and can, in extreme cases, cause a pathology. In the function of artistic work these dimensions are very close. Brant and Minayo-Gomez (2004) show that suffering is the state of expectation in the face of danger and preparation for it. This can mean anguish in the face of an unknown danger; fear, when he is known; or fright, when the subject is faced with a danger without being prepared to face it.

Suffering, marked by a 'state of expectation in the face of danger', presupposes the existence of a record, of a linguistic code that allows identifying, naming and communicating certain perceptions assessed as a threat. In the preparation to face it, it is possible to find the dimension that defines the subject, his submission to certain discourses. (BRANT; MINAYO-GOMEZ, 2004, p. 5).

It is understood in the assertion of Brant and Minayo-Gomez (2004) that suffering is processed through occasions of records of situations that the subject identifies as a threat, and its degree of intensity will depend on the environments and events experienced within the work. The experiences of suffering emerge associated with the division and standardization of tasks with underutilization of technical potential and creativity; hierarchical rigidity, with excessive bureaucratic procedures, political interference, centralization of information, lack of participation in decisions and non-recognition; and little prospect of professional growth. The concept of pleasure is directly related to the concept of psychic load, because "the pleasure of the worker results from the discharge of psychic energy that the task authorizes; which corresponds to a decrease in the psychic burden of work" (DEJOURS, 1994, p. 24).

To obtain pleasure, it is necessary that the way the work is organized provides conditions for the person to relax their tensions, which is usually possible to verify in the freely chosen jobs and when they allow the recognition of the worker for the result of his effort. In this way, work can be seen as balancing the psychic load, and "pleasure is experienced when work favors appreciation and recognition, especially by performing a significant and important task for the organization and society (MENDES; ABRAHÃO, 1996, p. 5).



It is noteworthy that the achievement of pleasure is directly linked to the conditions of work, which include from interpersonal relationships to recognition for the work performed. And about the pleasure at work, Silva points out:

Pleasure is linked to a consonance between the desires, desires and aspirations of the worker and what the context of production can offer. Thus, the flexibilization of work organization is of fundamental importance for the establishment of pleasure at work; the possibility of seeing the beginning, middle and end of the activity; (SILVA, 2004, p. 38).

In many organizations, pleasure is identified when the worker has the possibility of overcoming each of the principles mentioned, because the absence of one of them can manifest itself in suffering to the detriment of pleasure at work. The main components most evident to work can be considered as experiences of pleasure: concrete and symbolic satisfaction, collective and individual experiences, work content, recognition, culture, freedom and autonomy, which together form a set of extremely positive factors. According to Dejours (1994), the experiences of pleasure arise when the intellectual, motor or psychosensory demands of the task converge to satisfy the needs of the worker, in such a way that the simple execution of the activity provides pleasure. Thus, it is important to analyze the subjective mobilizations of the teaching worker who are submitted to a work organization.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The Psychodynamics of Work method provides steps that serve as guidelines for fieldwork. The following method is described in the book "The Madness of Work" (DEJOURS, 1992).

1- The demand and its constitution: the pre-research phase.

For the construction of the study, two essential assumptions are made: the volunteering of the participants and the agreement of the institution to carry out the research. This phase creates objective conditions for conducting the research, discussing the principles of Psychodynamics of Work among workers, identifying volunteers interested in participating in the other stages and organizing the groups.

2- The poll or the poll itself.

This phase consists of group discussions that occur at intervals that depend on the availability of all workers. The purpose of the groups is to trigger reflection and transformative action. In this phase, we seek to create a collective space for discussion that favors the verbalization of workers. The researchers are attentive to the content of the speeches, to the contradictory discussions, to what emerges spontaneously or not, to what is said or omitted in relation to certain themes and to the characteristics of the organization of work. The delimitation of the empirical universe of the research is limited to the professors of a Public University of the State of Goiás, Unit of the Municipality of Porangatu Goiás.



## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the elaboration of the questionnaire, the research sought to identify the subjective mobilization of the worker and the impacts generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the perception of pleasure and suffering related to the previous period and during the Covid-19 pandemic. 40 questionnaires were sent and the percentage of return was 55%. The teachers described the importance of their work as being a form of sustenance for them and their family (82%), personal fulfillment (73%) and rewarding and pleasurable (59%). Based on this, one can consider the support of the family as the main component for the experiences of pleasure: personal fulfillment and work as being rewarding and pleasurable that, together, form a set of extremely positive factors.

Table 1 – Difficulties and Facilities found to teach classes in the remote model (*online*).

Difficulties	Facilities
Internet (lacking, oscillating or inadequate for professional use): 68.6%	Handling of technologies (Software and resources to teach your classes): 50%
Adaptation of class content to the remote (online) format: 59.1%	Equipment (quality and/or availability): 40.9%
Physical space (lack or inadequate space for work): 40.9%	Internet availability or suitable for professional use): 36.4%
Equipment (lack or inadequacy): 36.4%	Adaptation of class content to the remote (online) format: 31.8%
Handling of technologies (Software and resources to teach your classes): 31.8%	Physical space (availability and suitable for work): 31.8%
Work in the remote format (lack of adaptation): 31.8%	Other: 13.6%
Other: 9%	None: 13.6%

Source: Survey data (2021).

The Psychodynamics of Work considers that the organization of work is a negotiated commitment between those who organize it and those who do it. And the teaching practice presents an organization in which the professional assumes the responsibility to develop his work in exhausting days, with intense routines that, almost always, will only be completed outside the work environment. Thus, it is verified that the organization of work evolves and transforms: the facilities change, the market changes, the client changes, the labor relations change and transform the quality of the work. In the case of the teacher, the transformations of education, throughout history, have changed not only his function but also a demand for new commitments to be assumed by him.

In this sense, what is pointed out by Freitas (2013) when it comes to the change in the educational process and in the essential knowledge from the use of technologies. In this perspective, the greatest difficulties encountered by teachers in the remote context were the internet (absence, oscillation, or inadequate for professional use), with 68.6%, followed by the adaptation of the content of the classes to the remote format (*online*), 59.1% and physical space (lack or inadequate space for work), 40.9%. For the professors, they consider as the greatest facilities found to teach the classes in



the remote context (*online*): handling of technologies (Software and resources to teach their classes), with 50%, followed by equipment (quality and/or availability) with 40.9% and internet (availability or adequate for professional use), with 36.4%. Thus, it is understood, therefore, that each teacher has specific facilities to be met so that, in this way, can ensure the longevity and physical/mental health of the worker, and improve the involvement of the employee with the organization.

Table 2: -Experiences of Pleasure and suffering with the change of classes to the remote model (*online*).

Suffering and Pleasure of classes in a remote model	
Pleasure	Suffering
Use of new media and digital tools: 54.5%	Lack of student participation in remote classes: 90.9%
End of time spent commuting: 50%	Absence of face-to-face contact with the student: 86.4%
Telecommuting (working from home): 31.8%	Increase in workload: 81.8%
Solve problems via email or WhatsApp: 31.8%	Join multiple WhatsApp groups: 54.5%
Reduction of labor expenses: 22.7%	Absence of face-to-face contact with co-workers: 50%
Nothing brought satisfaction: 18.2%	Lack of appropriate space to work from home: 27.3%
Absence of face-to-face contact: 0%	Lack of skill in handling new technologies: 22.7%
Workload reduction: 0%	The format of Telework (remote work / home office): 13.6%
	Other: 9%

Source: Survey data (2021).

From the data presented in table 2, it is possible to infer that job satisfaction is an emotional state that results from the evaluation that a professional makes about the extent to which his work represents the ability to facilitate or allow the fulfillment of his objectives and values, that is, to provide him with pleasure. The group of teachers surveyed can find pleasure in various situations such as the use of new media and digital tools (54.5%), the end of time spent commuting (50%), telework (31.8%) and also the possibility of solving problems via email or WhatsApp (31.8 %).

According to the respondents, for the teachers of the researched group, work also generates suffering. The research evidenced this experience when, in the teacher's response, he mentions the lack of ability in handling new technologies (90.9%), absence of personal contact with the student (86.4%) and increase in the volume of work at home with 81.8%. Many teachers reported that there is an excess of activities performed outside the classroom, in free time and, with this, they do not have time to rest. Thus, they end up considering these activities as manual labor. In this sense, according to Dejours (2016), suffering has its origin in the mechanization of tasks, in the adaptation of organizational culture or ideology, in market pressures, and also in the creation of incompetencies that develop, in the worker, a feeling of incapacity in the face of situations.



Thus, suffering is processed according to the occasions and situations that the individual identifies as a threat; The intensity of suffering depends on the environment experienced at work. It is important to recognize that suffering does not manifest itself in a single way for everyone, that is, it is a feeling inherent in each human being, motivated by certain situations experienced by the individual within the workplace.

31.8% of the professors when asked about the emergence or aggravation of diseases caused due to the need to adapt their activities to a technological context due to the use of media resources to teach their classes in the midst of the pandemic, stated that there was no emergence or aggravation. However, 59.1% of the professors highlighted the emergence or worsening of "Stress", followed by muscle pain with 36.4%, vision problems with 22.7%, fatigue and depression with 18.2%. This scenario confirms the idea that the adoption of new technologies and the new techniques used to teach classes in a pandemic context has emerged a new type of demand that stresses the teaching practice culminating in stress and, consequently, a physical and mental malaise.

One of the specific objectives of this research with the teachers of the public school of the Municipality of Porangatu – Goiás, was to identify the coping strategies that these teachers use to mitigate their difficulties, dissatisfactions or diseases related to their work. Dejours (1993) points out these strategies within the aspects related to the subjective mobilizations of work, which enables the worker not only to recognize the causative agents, but also in the transformation of possible suffering into activities that can generate satisfaction and pleasure at work. This research showed that 68.2% of the teachers interviewed use the practice of physical activity as their main strategy to cope with their adversities. The practice of access to *streamer* service bases (platforms that provide films, series and documentaries) is configured in second place as a coping strategy, totaling 54.5% of the teachers interviewed. The various practices of subjective mobilization of work and coping strategies presented in this research also mention the use of tutorials, visits to family members, therapy, medical follow-up demonstrates what Dejours (1994; 1999) states that the individual uses his body and his intelligence to thus assist him in his professional practice in a defensive and compensatory way.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research describes characteristics of the teaching work of a higher education institution, as well as the subjective mobilization of work and the impacts generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the contributions of the Psychodynamics of Work recognizing that professional activity, in addition to enabling financial gains, is also a form of personal fulfillment and social insertion and that physical and psychological aspects are strongly implicated in these Activities.

The research pointed out that the way of effecting the subjective mobilization of work by each individual can trigger factors of disappointments, diseases, devaluation, mental imbalances; as well as





it can build factors of balance and development because they have the power to interfere in the psychic functioning of the worker. On the other hand, the experiences of pleasure were observed in the offer of working conditions so that it becomes a source of satisfaction and recognition, causing feelings of well-being. However, the experiences of suffering arise from impositions, pressures, unstructured environment, service overload, dissatisfaction and many other factors of negative aspect. It is in the experiences of suffering that the individual perceives a state that fights against itself to maintain balanced mental health.

The conduct of this research on the subjective mobilization of the teaching work of the institution of higher education in Porangatu -GO, evidenced the coping strategies used by the group, not only recognizes the causative agents of suffering, but also the use of physical and mental actions to minimize this suffering. The research makes it evident that the teachers interviewed during their activities during the pandemic (Covid-19) are exposed to factors that demand a (re)adaptation of their activities with the use of new technologies, which consequently generates pressures and stress in their work routine. These pressures and high levels of stress are known to be providers of suffering. The interviewees in turn face their sufferings arising from physical or mental stress by adhering to activities such as walking outdoors, or accessing the platforms of *streamers*, which corroborate the idea that there is a relationship between the experiences of suffering and the experiences of pleasures that are recognized in leisure situations even in the organizational context of teaching.



## REFERENCES

- BRASIL. Ministério da Educação e Cultura. Evolução da educação especial no Brasil. Brasília, DF: Portal do MEC, 2017. Disponível em: <portal.mec.gov.br>. Acesso em: 21 abril 2021.
- BRANT, Luiz Carlos; MINAYO-GOMEZ, Carlos. A transformação do sofrimento em adoecimento: do nascimento da clínica à Psicodinâmica do Trabalho. *Ciênc. saúde coletiva* [online], v. 9, n. 1, 2004.
- DEJOURS, Christophe. *Note de travail sur la notion de souffrance*. In: DEJOURS, Christophe. (Org.). *Plaisir et souffrance dans le travail*, (tome 1). Paris: 'AOCIP, 115-123. 1987.
- A Loucura do Trabalho: Estudo de Psicopatologia do Trabalho. 5. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 1992.
- Travail. Usure mental. De la psychopathologie du travail à la Psychodynamique du travail*. Ed. Ampliada. Paris: Bayard, 1993.
- ABDOUCHELLI, Elisabeth; JAYET, Chritian (Orgs). Psicodinâmica do trabalho: contribuições da escola dejouriana à análise da relação prazer, sofrimento e trabalho. São Paulo: Atlas, 1994.
- et. alli. Psicodinâmica do trabalho: contribuições da Escola Dejouriana à análise de relação prazer, sofrimento e trabalho. São Paulo, Atlas, 1994.
- A banalização da injustiça social. Tradução de Luiz Alberto Monjardim. 1. Reimp. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. FGV, 1999.
- Situations du travail*. Presses Universitaires de France, 2016.
- FREITAS, Lêda Gonçalves de (coord.). *Prazer e Sofrimento no Trabalho Docente: Pesquisas Brasileiras*. Curitiba: Juruá, 2013.
- HAMZE, Amélia. Escola Nova e o movimento de renovação do ensino. 2013, Disponível em: <<http://www.brasile scola.com.br>>. Acessado em 21/04/2021.
- HERNANDES, Janete Capel. *Vivências de prazer-sofrimento: um estudo exploratório com trabalhadores de um hotel de Goiânia*. Dissertação (mestrado em Psicologia) - Universidade Católica de Goiás, Goiânia, 2003.
- MENDES, Ana Magnólia, *Valores e vivências de prazer-sofrimento no contexto organizacional*. TESE de Doutorado, UNB, 1999.
- ABRAHÃO, J. I. A influência da organização do trabalho nas vivências de prazer-sofrimento dos trabalhadores: uma abordagem psicodinâmica. *Revista Psicologia Teoria e Pesquisa*, Brasília, v. 26, n. 2, p. 179-184, 1996.
- SILVA, R. R. *Profissão pastor: prazer e sofrimento. Uma análise Psicodinâmica do Trabalho de líderes religiosos neopentecostais e tradicionais*. Dissertação (Mestrado) – Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, 2004.