


## QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS IN A MUNICIPALITY ON THE COAST OF THE STATE OF PARANÁ

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.037-101>

**Denise Maria Vaz Romano França<sup>1</sup> and Pierangela Nota Simões<sup>2</sup>.**

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Teaching is a profession that requires dedication and knowledge, facing challenges such as devaluation and work overload. This study investigates the quality of life at work (QWL) of Early Childhood Education teachers in Pontal do Paraná, considering factors such as working conditions and professional recognition. **Objective:** To analyze how the teaching work impacts the quality of life of teachers, seeking to understand the realities of local institutions and identify unsatisfactory and satisfactory aspects in the work environment. **Method:** Descriptive and exploratory research, which applied the Total Quality Work Life questionnaire (TQWL-42) to assess QWL. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to 24 teachers, and data analysis was performed using the syntax SPSS and TQWL-42. **Results:** The results indicated an unsatisfactory level of quality of life, especially in the biological sphere, which includes physical and mental disposition, work capacity and health services. Excessive workload and lack of job stability were identified as critical factors. Most of the participants were female, facing double workdays. **Conclusion:** The research highlights the need to value the work of teachers, improving working conditions and health care. Aspects such as freedom of expression and autonomy are unsatisfactory, while job security is a positive point. Recognizing and supporting teachers is crucial, as they play a vital role in education and society, positively impacting the school environment and student development.

**Keywords:** Quality of life. Early childhood education. Teaching work. Teachers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. in Communication Disorders  
Professor at the State University of Paraná (UNESPAR)

<sup>2</sup> Dr. in Communication Disorders  
Professor at the State University of Paraná (UNESPAR)

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a profession that requires dedication, knowledge and commitment, in addition to playing an identity role in the lives of individuals, as highlighted by Taveira (2013). This study investigated the quality of life at work of Early Childhood Education teachers in a municipality on the coast of Paraná, considering the complexity of their functions and factors such as devaluation, workload inside and outside the school system, career plans, professional recognition, inadequate resources during the hour-activity and low remuneration

The research sought to answer: how is the quality of life at work of Early Childhood Education teachers in the public network of the municipality from the analysis of the impact of the teaching work on the quality of life of teachers to understand the realities of local institutions.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

The concept of quality of life is intrinsically abstract, varying in meaning for different individuals, in different contexts and situations. Historically, the term was introduced in the early twentieth century by Pigou and gained prominence after World War II as a critique of policies focused exclusively on economic growth (Klutchovsky; Takayanagui, 2006). Over time, the concept expanded to include aspects of social development, such as education, health, and leisure.

In addition, quality of life is directly related to the individual's ways of life and relationships, with their habits and environment being the main factors of positive or negative classification. It expresses the level of basic and supplementary human conditions, including physical and mental health, social relationships, education, and other parameters that affect human life. Quality of life is an eminently human notion, linked to the degree of satisfaction in the family, love, social and environmental spheres, as well as to existential aesthetics (Minayo, Hartz & Buss, 2000).

Therefore, quality of life arises from the interest in measuring an individual's living conditions in relation to their expectations, norms, and concerns, reflecting the difference between their expectations and their current experience (Gómez & Caballero, 2021). It is a topic widely discussed and researched by scholars from various areas, with the difficulty of definition being a common characteristic (Herculano, 1998).

## QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK

The concept of quality of life at work (QWL) refers to the level of satisfaction of a professional in relation to the functions performed in an organization. It involves aspects such as management, infrastructure and health in the work environment (Rodrigues, 2007). QWL emerged in the 1970s, with a shift in the focus of organizational management, and has evolved to include socioeconomic, organizational, and human condition at work currents of thought.

Workers' health is directly related to the quality of life at work. The World Health Organization defines QWL as the individual's perception of their position in life, within the cultural context and values in which they are inserted, in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns (WHO, 1998). The regulation of occupational health standards began in the 1970s, bringing benefits that include the elimination, control and preservation of health and well-being in the workplace (Sampaio, 2004).

Thus, health and quality of life are interconnected issues, with physical and mental health being essential for a good quality of life. The absence of medical care can negatively impact quality of life, affecting personal, professional, and social relationships. From the employer's point of view, QWL is seen as a means of enhancing productivity and the quality of results (Rocha, 2007).

Finding a balance between the demands of employers and employees is ideal for building a healthy organizational culture, valuing the employee and caring about the results delivered. QWL involves employee satisfaction with their functions and the work environment, covering physical, emotional, psychological and financial issues (Chiavenato, 2004).

According to the legislation, QWL is an organizational precept that aims to promote physical, psychological, and social well-being, based on the humanization of work and the social responsibility of the institution (Brasil, 2021). The promotion of health, safety at work and well-being are essential components for creating a healthier and safer work environment.

Initiatives related to QWL seek to promote the integral health of workers, adjusting to management practices that have evolved over time. Programs such as the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation aim to improve the organizational climate, value work and encourage beneficial habits, promoting healthy social integration and family life.

Chart 1 lists three factors that affect the creation of a healthier and safer work environment (Ministry of Health, 2021)

Chart 1 - Factors that affect the work environment.

Physical well-being	Physical health status, which is related to the functioning of the human body, encompassing aspects such as genetics, nutritional conditions, disposition, strength, physical activity, sleep and rest
Mental well-being	It consists of managing emotions in a positive way in the face of adversities imposed by external factors
Welfare	It is the individual's ability to interact in society in a healthy and balanced way for all

Source: Adapted from Pafiadache (2021)

Working conditions, career satisfaction and socio-occupational relationships are fundamental to improve the promotion of health and quality of life at work for public servants. To this end, plans and actions are developed considering the recognition and appreciation of civil servants, addressing factors that affect their individual and collective health.

The Gaffrée and Guinle University Hospital (HUGG), part of the Brazilian Company of Hospital Services (Ebserh) and linked to the Ministry of Education (MEC), created the Committee for Quality of Life at Work (CQVT) to focus on actions in this regard. The CQVT conducted an organizational climate survey to capture the opinion of employees, essential for an accurate and effective diagnosis.

After identifying the needs, the Committee proposed short, medium and long-term implementations, with the main objective of improving the quality of life at work. The choice and execution of appropriate programs are differentials that result in improvements in the organizational climate, increased satisfaction, employee health, performance, reduction of stress and absences, in addition to more engaged and motivated employees. These factors also contribute to a better corporate image (Brasil, 2021).

It should be noted that improving QWL benefits not only employees, but the organization as a whole, since satisfied and healthy employees are more productive.

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

From early childhood education, teachers strive to create an environment that facilitates learning, using attractive materials and dedicating time for children to explore and interact, making learning enjoyable and stimulating. However, this dedication can result in overload and stress, with teachers sacrificing their personal lives to dedicate themselves fully to their work.

Kanaane (1999) highlights that "Quality of Life is represented by facilitating conditions that imply the well-being of the employee, in terms of the achievement of what he seeks as a person, as a professional, as a social being" (p.58). Thus, for teachers' QWL, it

is essential that schools and their managers are concerned with the daily life of teachers, providing a collaborative and valuing work environment.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of teachers is driven by a continuous process of professional improvement and updating. Thus, managers should facilitate access to training and events that promote best practices and educational innovations, encouraging the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Godinho (2018), in turn, points out that problems such as lack of motivation, inadequate working conditions, and deficient salary structures significantly affect the teaching work. In addition to classroom activities, teachers face the overload of administrative tasks and planning, which can negatively impact their personal lives, which is why teachers need to be encouraged to balance their professional responsibilities with time for leisure and rest.

In addition to QWL being a relevant topic today, since it directly influences professional performance (Fernandes, 1996), in the educational context, teachers' working conditions not only affect their own lives, but also have a multiplier effect on student development and school dynamics as a whole.

An analysis of recent studies on this topic showed that university teaching, professional career, the challenges of teaching practice at the time of the pandemic, and the teacher in the context of the public university are subjects strongly related to the working conditions of teachers, which unfold into remuneration and compensation for work, mental health support, and balance between curricular and extracurricular activities, in addition to the impact of management models on the work environment (Sanchez et al. 2017; Veiga et al. 2017; Square; Oliveira, 2020; Klein et al, 2022).

The balance between work and leisure is essential for teachers to perform their duties well. Dumazedier (1973) recalls that the teachers' routine goes beyond the activities carried out in the classroom, including the correction of assignments and the preparation of lesson plans. However, it often becomes inevitable to accumulate tasks in and out of school. Factors such as competitiveness, precarious material resources, low salaries and the increase in teachers' responsibilities contribute to exhaustion and contradiction in relation to the training offered (Gomes; Brito, 2006).

Excessive involvement in professional activities, depending on working conditions, the pace and number of tasks, can harm the health of workers. The long working day is one of the main manifestations of the intensification and overload of demands on teachers, most of whom are women who still face the burden of domestic work (Campos; Viegas, 2021, p. 02).

Faced with these conditions, teachers often prioritize their professional obligations over self-care, resulting in physical and mental exhaustion. Among teachers, there is a unanimous perception that the work is becoming increasingly intense, leading to overload, exhaustion and exhaustion (Campos; Viegas, 2021).

## IMPACT OF TEACHER APPRECIATION AND TRAINING ON QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK

Education is widely recognized as one of the fundamental pillars of a society, and, therefore, teachers should occupy a prominent position, receiving appreciation and adequate conditions for the exercise of their functions. Education is a social practice that shapes human existence, both individually and collectively, developing in individuals the essential characteristics of the human being.

According to Libâneo (2010), educators are professionals involved in various educational practices, directly or indirectly related to the organization and transmission of knowledge and behavior patterns. These professionals meet the objectives of human formation defined in their historical context. Valuing teachers is crucial to ensure quality education, as teacher performance impacts both student performance and the quality of schools and the progress of nations.

To achieve these goals, it is necessary for teachers to receive adequate remuneration, have access to the necessary resources to fulfill their responsibilities, and actively participate in the formulation of public education policies. Recently, the Ministry of Education (MEC) announced a readjustment of the teachers' salary floor, in accordance with the professional enhancement policy provided for in the National Education Plan (PNE). Goal 17 of the PNE aims to equate the average income of teaching professionals in public basic education networks to that of other professionals with equivalent education (Brasil, 2023).

The 14.9% adjustment was implemented on January 17, 2023, raising the minimum salary for teachers from R\$ 3,845.63 to R\$ 4,420.55. However, on February 27, 2023, an injunction filed by the Intermunicipal Consortium of Education and Teaching of Paraná (CIEDEPAR) suspended the right to the floor. The Federal Government argued that the update of the value for 2023, according to the attacked Ordinance, followed the update criterion established in Opinion No. 1/2023/CGVAL/DIFOR/SEB/SEB (Brasil, 2023).

The withdrawal of this right significantly affects the personal and professional lives of educators, as the expectation of salary increases provides security for new acquisitions and ideas. Financial satisfaction, derived from what money can provide, is one of the factors that influence quality of life.

Landini (2007) highlights that the interest in the well-being of teachers has revealed the relationship between teaching practice and teachers' health conditions. These conditions can bring both satisfaction and pathologies, resulting from the working conditions themselves. The contemporary conditions faced by teachers have generated high levels of anguish and suffering, resulting in mental health problems.

Several factors make up the quality of life in the teaching work, including infrastructure, work environment, access to health services, time for leisure and family life, working hours and workload. Godinho (2018, p. 31) states that "work is an important source of meaning for a happy life", influenced by environmental, organizational and behavioral factors. The teachers' working hours, considering the time of rest and leisure, often exceed 40 hours per week, due to activities such as correction of assignments and preparation of materials carried out beyond the hours accounted for (Pizzio; Klein, 2015; Johanim, 2018).

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

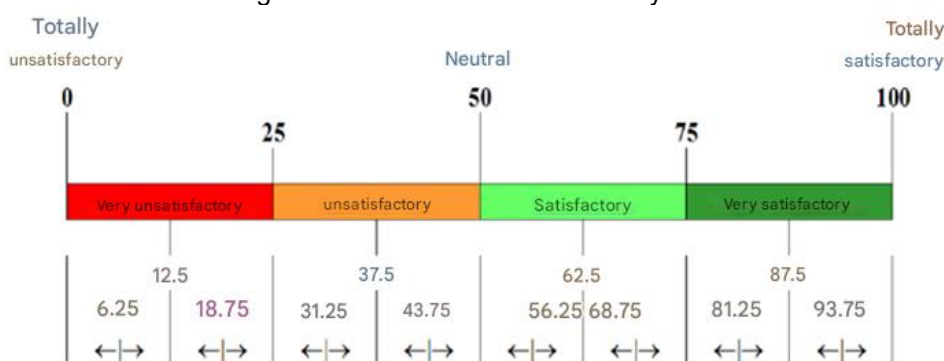
The study, of a descriptive and exploratory nature, was conducted with Early Childhood Education teachers in Pontal do Paraná. According to Gil (2017), exploratory research aims to familiarize the researcher with the phenomenon under study, while descriptive research aims to characterize a population or phenomenon without interference in the data (Gil, 1999). The exploratory phase included a bibliographic survey and the research was approved by the UNESPAR Ethics Committee (CAAE 51963421.8.0000.9247).

The Total Quality Work Life questionnaire (TQWL-42), developed by Pedroso (2010), was statistically validated with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85, indicating high reliability (Pedroso et al., 2014). The questionnaire, similar to the WHOQOL and WHOQOL-Bref of the WHO, globally assesses the quality of life at work, without prevalent domains, with 47 questions: 5 identification and 42 in the biological, psychological, sociological, economic and environmental areas (Pedroso, 2014).

The questionnaire was adapted for Google Forms and distributed remotely to teachers. Data analysis was performed using the syntax SPSS and TQWL-42, provided by Pedroso. To interpret the results, the quality of life at work scale by Timossi et al. (2009) was applied, where the central point (50) indicates an intermediate level, with values below and above representing dissatisfaction and satisfaction, respectively, as shown in Figure 1:



Figure 1 – Scale used for data analysis.



Source: Source: Classification of quality of life at work Timossi et al. (2009) Apud Pedroso (2010.p.109)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire "TQWL-42 – Questionnaire for the Assessment of Quality of Life at Work" was administered electronically via Google Forms, with the voluntary participation of 24 teachers of Early Childhood Education in Pontal do Paraná. Participants answered 47 questions, mostly multiple-choice, without personal data collection, for the sole purpose of scientific research.

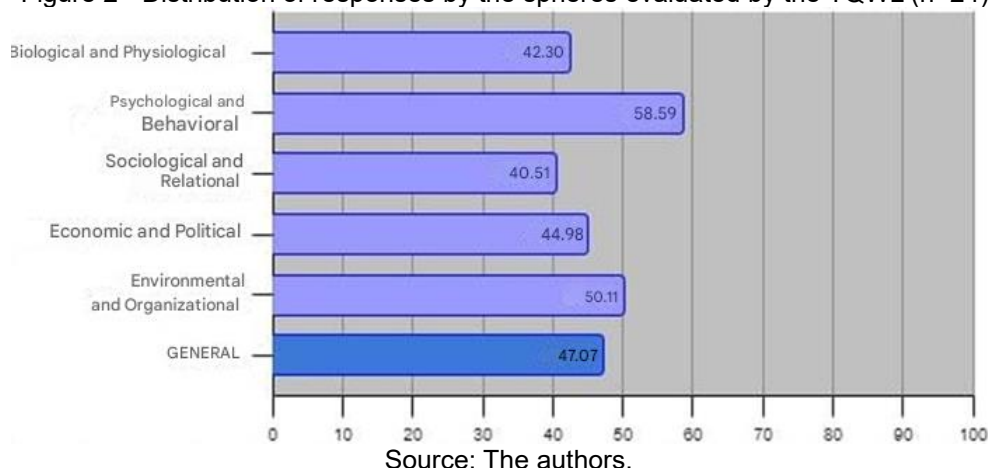
The data analysis revealed that the participants are aged between 17 and 59 years, with a predominance of 87.5% of females and 12.5% of males. In terms of marital status, 41.7% are married or in a stable union. Regarding academic training, 29.2% have completed a postgraduate degree, while 37.5% are studying undergraduate or specialization.

Teachers have, on average, approximately 53.41 months of service time, equivalent to about 4.4 years of professional experience in the area of education. These data indicate the construction of careers within the educational sector. The results presented were based on the identification questions, and then the results of the research using Pedroso's (2010) calculation instrument will be discussed.

The analysis of the data presented in Figure 2 reveals that teachers report an unsatisfactory level of quality of life, with 42.41% of the answers reflecting this perception. Previous studies, such as those by Koetz et al. (2013) and França and Lacerda (2020), have also identified a negative perception of quality of life among teachers. The lowest scores were observed in the biological sphere.



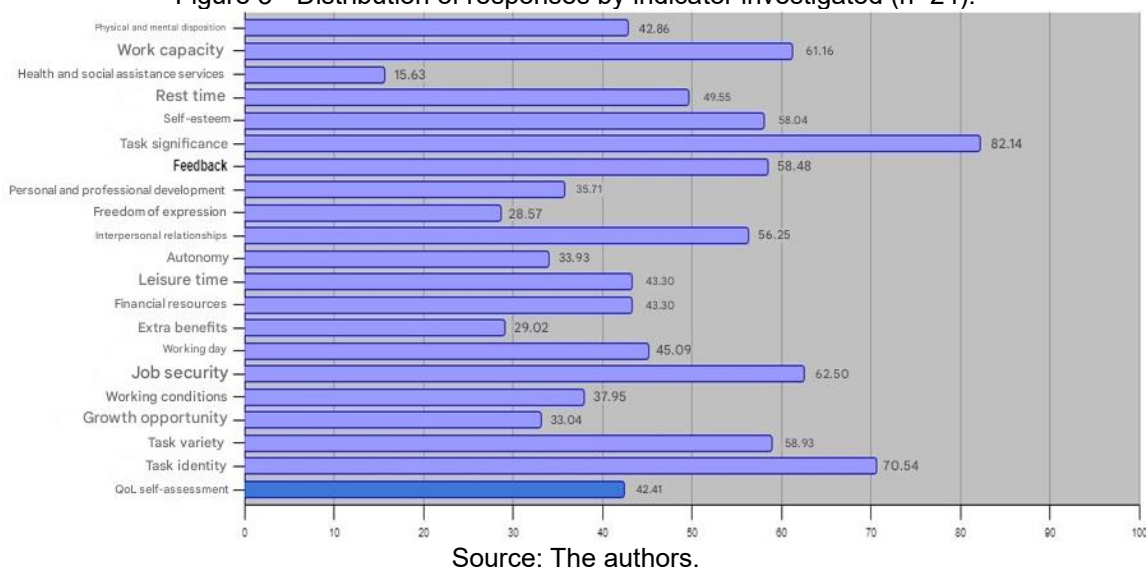
Figure 2 - Distribution of responses by the spheres evaluated by the TQWL (n=24).



The results regarding the lowest scores corroborate studies such as that of Oliveira (2017), which identify workload as a determining factor for occupational illness. Pizzio and Klein (2015) and Johanim (2018) highlight that teachers' working hours often exceed 40 hours per week, in addition to underlining the double shift faced by teachers, who reconcile professional activities with domestic tasks. This is particularly relevant considering that the majority of participants in this study are female.

According to Pedroso (2010), the biological sphere includes indicators such as physical and mental disposition, which refers to the energy available for work; work capacity, related to effectiveness in the execution of tasks; health and social assistance services offered by the institution, including medical, dental and psychological care; and rest time, which is the period available for rest between working days. The detailed indicators, in turn, are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Distribution of responses by indicator investigated (n=24).



Significant negative aspects also include insufficient health and social care services offered to teachers, as well as extra benefits, financial resources, and autonomy. Veiga et al. (2017) identified that the greatest dissatisfaction is linked to the dimension of remuneration and compensation.

It is important to highlight that this research was conducted with teachers from the public school system, of whom 38% have temporary positions, meaning that 10 participants have no guarantee of functional stability. According to Pizzio and Klein (2015), job stability contributes to the reduction of illness among teachers, improving their quality of life at work.

Lago et al. (2015) observe that, in public educational institutions, although there is identification with stability and personal fulfillment, precariousness and work overload prevail, which promotes suffering and illnesses.

Basso (1998) emphasizes the importance of teacher autonomy for the effective development of knowledge. However, this research reveals that teachers often do not have autonomy in their actions, being conditioned to the approval of the coordination.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study enabled an analysis of the quality of life at work of Early Childhood Education teachers in Pontal do Paraná. The professors identified the most unsatisfactory and satisfactory aspects experienced in the last two weeks in their work environment.

Among the most unsatisfactory aspects are freedom of expression, autonomy, working conditions, health care services offered by the employer and extra benefits. This suggests the need to value the teaching work through actions that build an effective assistance network and a work organization that correctly measures the responsibilities of teachers. In addition, it is crucial to distribute activities fairly, including management and coordination positions, to ensure freedom of expression in the workplace, allowing everyone to contribute to the success of the institution.

On the other hand, satisfactory aspects such as job security and career importance must be maintained and expanded to mitigate job insecurity. Despite the challenges and devaluation of certain aspects of the teaching profession, most professionals report an average quality of life at work.

It is important to remember that, in addition to their professional function, teachers are individuals with feelings, emotions, anxieties and fears. Therefore, the biological, psychological and physical aspects of these professionals need greater protection and attention. We must recognize and value teachers who play a crucial role in our society, expressing our admiration and respect for their contribution to education and building a



better future. They accompany students, transmit knowledge and actively participate in the teaching and learning process, facing educational and emotional challenges, and adapting students' previous knowledge to the school's curricular content.

## REFERENCES

1. Basso, I. S. (1998). Significado e sentido do trabalho docente. Caderno CEDES, 19(44).
2. Brasil. Ministério da Educação. (n.d.). Eleva o piso nacional dos professores de R\$ 3.845,63 para R\$ 4.420,55. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/ministerio-da-educacao-eleva-o-piso-nacional-dos-professores-de-r-3-845-63-para-r-4-420-55>
3. Campos, M. F. de, & Viegas, M. F. (2021). Saúde mental no trabalho docente: Um estudo sobre autonomia, intensificação e sobrecarga. Cadernos de Pesquisa, 28(2), 417–437.
4. Chiavenato, I. (2004). Gestão de pessoas. Elsevier.
5. Dumazedier, J. (1994). A revolução do tempo livre (L. O. L. Camargo & M. Ansarah, Trans.). Sesc/Nobel.
6. Lago, R. R., Cunha, B. S. e B., & Oliveira, M. F. de S. (2015). Percepção do trabalho docente em uma universidade da região Norte do Brasil. Trabalho, Educação e Saúde, 13(2), 429–450.
7. Fernandes, E. (1996). Qualidade de vida no trabalho: Como medir para melhorar. Casa da Qualidade.
8. França, A. C. L. (1997). Qualidade de vida no trabalho: Conceitos, abordagens, inovações e desafios nas empresas brasileiras. Revista Brasileira de Medicina Psicossomática, 1(2), 79–83.
9. França, D. M. V. R., & Laranjeira, C. A. (2020). Qualidade de vida e saúde: Uma perspectiva interdisciplinar. In Qualidade de vida e saúde: Uma perspectiva interdisciplinar (pp. 63–76). CRV.
10. Godinho, L. F. R. (2018). Sentidos do trabalho docente. UFRB.
11. Gil, A. C. (1999). Métodos e técnicas de pesquisa social. Atlas.
12. Gil, C. (2017). Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa (6th ed.). Atlas.
13. Gomes, L., & Brito, J. (2006). Desafios e possibilidades ao trabalho docente e à sua relação com a saúde. Estudos e Pesquisas em Psicologia, 6(1), 49–62.
14. Herculano, S. C. (1998). Qualidade de vida e seus indicadores. Revista Ambiente e Sociedade, 1(2), 77–100.
15. HUGG. (n.d.). Institui Comitê de Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho. Empresa Brasileira de Serviços Hospitalares. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/ebserh/pt-br/comunicacao/noticias/hugg-institui-comite-de-qualidade-de-vida-no-trabalho>
16. Kanaane, R. (2009). Comportamento humano nas organizações: O homem rumo ao século XXI. Atlas.

17. Kluthcovsky, A. C. G. C., & Takayangu, A. M. M. (2007). Qualidade de vida – aspectos conceituais. *Revista Salus*, 1(1), 13–15.
18. Landini, S. R. (2007). Professor, trabalho e saúde: As políticas educacionais, a materialidade histórica e as consequências para a saúde do trabalhador-professor. *Colloquium Humanarum*, 4(1), 8–21.
19. Libâneo, J. C. (2010). *Pedagogia e pedagogos, para quê?* (12th ed.). Cortez.
20. Minayo, M. C. de S., Hartz, Z. M. de A., & Buss, P. M. (2000). Qualidade de vida e saúde: Um debate necessário. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 5, 7–18.
21. OMS. (1998). *Promoción de la salud: Glosario*. OMS.
22. Pedroso, B. (2010). Desenvolvimento do TQWL-42: Um instrumento de avaliação da qualidade de vida no trabalho. (pp. 1–145).
23. Pedroso, et al. (2014). Avaliação da qualidade de vida no trabalho. *Revista de Salud Pública*, 16, 145–156.
24. Pizzio, A., & Klein, K. (2015). Qualidade de vida no trabalho e adoecimento no cotidiano de docentes do ensino superior. *Educação & Sociedade*, 36(131), 493–513.
25. Praça, L. A., & de Oliveira, V. M. (2020). Qualidade de vida no trabalho em tempos de pandemia de COVID-19: Os desafios e oportunidades dos docentes do ensino superior. *Gestão-Revista Científica*, 2(2).
26. Rocha, V. M. da, & Fernandes, M. H. (2007). Qualidade de vida de professores do ensino fundamental: Uma perspectiva para a promoção da saúde do trabalhador. *Jornal Brasileiro de Psiquiatria*, 23–27.
27. Rodrigues, M. V. (2007). *Qualidade de vida no trabalho: Evolução e análise gerencial*. Vozes.
28. Sampaio, J. dos R. (2004). *Qualidade de vida no trabalho e psicologia social* (2nd ed.). Casa do Psicólogo.
29. Sanchez, H. M., Sanchez, E. G. D. M., Barbosa, M. A., Guimarães, E. C., & Porto, C. C. (2019). Impacto da saúde na qualidade de vida e trabalho de docentes universitários de diferentes áreas de conhecimento. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 24, 233–246.
30. Taveira, I. M. R. (2013). *Representações sociais da qualidade de vida no trabalho*. CRV.
31. Veiga, R. F., Afonso, M. da R., Farias, G. O., Sinott, E. C., & Ribeiro, J. A. B. (2017). Qualidade de vida no trabalho: Contexto de atuação profissional e carreira docente. *Pensar a Prática*, 20(2).