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Quality of Life and the Valuing of Faculty Members in Higher Education

Qualidade de Vida e Valorização Docente no Ensino Superior

Calidad de vida y valoración docente en la educación superior

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ABSTRACT
This article investigates the correlation between quality of life and professional valuing among faculty members at the State University of Bahia (UNEB). A total of 237 faculty members participated in the study, using the Q-VD and WHOQOL-Bref questionnaires delivered electronically. The results reveal that most faculty members do not feel valued (41.9%) or only partially valued (32.4%), with valuing policies considered insufficient (43.7%). Statistical analysis identified a moderate to strong positive correlation (r = 0.56) between financial sufficiency and quality of life. It is concluded that material valuing is central to faculty well-being, highlighting the need for policies that integrate adequate compensation, working conditions, and social recognition.
Keywords: Faculty. Higher Education. Quality of Life. Valuing of Faculty.

RESUMO
O presente artigo investiga a correlação entre qualidade de vida e valorização profissional de docentes da Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB). Participaram da pesquisa 237 docentes utilizando-se os questionários Q-VD e WHOQOL-Bref apresentados por meio eletrônico. Os resultados revelam que a maioria dos docentes não se sente valorizada (41,9%) ou apenas parcialmente (32,4%), com políticas de valorização consideradas insuficientes (43,7%). A análise estatística identificou uma correlação positiva moderada a forte (r = 0,56) entre suficiência financeira e qualidade de vida. Conclui-se que a valorização material é central para o bem-estar docente, destacando a necessidade de políticas que integrem remuneração adequada, condições de trabalho e reconhecimento social.
Palavras-chave: Docente. Ensino Superior. Qualidade de Vida. Valorização Docente.

RESUMEN
Este artículo investiga la correlación entre la calidad de vida y la valoración profesional del profesorado de la Universidad Estatal de Bahía (UNEB). Un total de 237 docentes participaron en el

estudio, utilizando los cuestionarios Q-VD y WHOQOL-Bref, distribuidos electrónicamente. Los resultados revelan que la mayoría del profesorado no se siente valorado (41,9%) o solo se siente valorado parcialmente (32,4%), y las políticas de valoración se consideran insuficientes (43,7%). El análisis estadístico identificó una correlación positiva de moderada a fuerte (r = 0,56) entre la suficiencia financiera y la calidad de vida. Se concluye que la valoración material es fundamental para el bienestar del profesorado, lo que resalta la necesidad de políticas que integren una remuneración adecuada, condiciones laborales y reconocimiento social.
Palabras clave: Profesorado. Educación superior. Calidad de vida. Valoración docente.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching in higher education, as explained by Nunes and Oliveira (2017), involves a multiplicity of tasks and functions structured through human interaction. This complexity demands from the professor continuous physical, psychological, and social effort. However, due to this specificity, faculty members have been constantly challenged to readapt and expand their activities in contemporary times, especially in the face of modern technologies and globalization. These changes imply an intensification of work, which is often conducted under precarious conditions (Pontes et al., 2020).

In addition to increased demands for mastery of content and growing institutional responsibilities, professors have also been pressured for productivity rates without corresponding compensation in terms of professional valuing. In this regard, Casagrande (2020) rightly observed that, although Brazil's National Education Plan (PNE) (Brasil, 2014) brought important guidelines and advances for higher education, such as expanding access, improving quality, and qualifying the teaching staff, it failed to explicitly include concrete strategies for the valuing of these professors during its term (2014–2024).

Masetto (2020) states that successful teaching in higher education requires breaking the isolation between classrooms and disciplines, which is only possible through a clear understanding of the importance of each component of the course's pedagogical project and the collective organization of the faculty. Without sense, for the author, any policy for faculty valuing (continuing education, career development, remuneration, working conditions, and health) is always a core relationship that connects this subject to all other essential links without which the educational performance demanded by today's society will not be achieved.

In this scenario, marked by the lack of reciprocity, increasing demands, and insufficient recognition, professors often exceed their limits, compromising their quality of life and exposing themselves to risks of illness (Davoglio et al., 2015). Cardoso Júnior et al. (2025) argue that quality of life is a concept under historical dispute and is still not fully clear or unanimous. For these authors, Quality of Life (QoL) should be understood based on the living conditions experienced by individuals in their potential for meaningful personal and social achievements, beyond the mere fulfillment of essential needs.

Thus, it becomes essential to analyze and understand more deeply this reality that associates quality of life with the professional valuing of these central actors. This article aims to do so considering the current working conditions that characterize contemporary higher education in Brazil.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted with tenured faculty members of the State University of Bahia (UNEB), also aiming to encourage a critical reflection among these professionals about their valuing and quality of life. In 2024, UNEB had 31 academic departments distributed across 27 campuses, one located in the capital of Bahia, where the central administration headquarters is situated, and the others in strategic municipalities in the state's interior (UNEB, 2024).

In that same year, the institution's faculty totaled 2,046 professors. The research population included faculty members working in all 27 university campuses. As an inclusion criterion, only active professors were considered, with voluntary participation in the study. The final sample consisted of 237 faculty members who fully responded to the questionnaires applied.

To capture the general perception of the quality of life of participating faculty, a sociodemographic survey was applied, along with instruments addressing faculty valuing and quality-of-life indicators. The instruments used were the Faculty Valuing Questionnaire (QVD), adapted to the research scope and validated by Moreira et al. (2022), and the WHOQOL-Bref quality-of-life questionnaire, validated by The WHOQOL Group (1998) from the World Health Organization. The variables obtained were statistically analyzed to identify possible correlations between them.

The questionnaires were made available via the Google Forms™ digital platform, with invitations sent to all members of the target population using the institutional email addresses provided by UNEB. Participation was conditional on the virtual signing of the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF). Invitations containing the link to the survey were first sent in August 2024 and reiterated weekly until the data collection closed in November 2024. It is important to emphasize that the study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the State University of Bahia (UNEB), under ruling no. 5.306.315.

The statistical analysis included the calculation of absolute frequencies, as well as the verification of correlations between variables with a homogeneous distribution of responses, using Pearson's correlation coefficient. These procedures were carried out with the support of SPSS software, version 24.0. Responses to open-ended questions, with free participation, were organized into text files (.txt) and analyzed using the IRAMUTEC™ software.

According to Camargo and Justo (2021), these software tools allow for multiple analytical approaches, both quantitative and qualitative, based on textual data. Among these functionalities, in addition to advanced statistics, basic lexicography (frequency of lexical occurrences) and multivariate discourse analyses, such as Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) and Similarity Analyses, are noteworthy. The software chosen for textual analysis presented results clearly and accessibly through visual representations such as word clouds, dendrograms, and similarity maps. According to Crespo (2002), the use of descriptive statistics enables the transformation of collected data into information that serves as a basis for deeper analyses.

From this perspective, the present research adopted a descriptive and exploratory approach, organizing, systematizing, and identifying patterns in the obtained data. The data analyzed in this article, as an excerpt from the broader research, outline a sociodemographic profile of the faculty of the State University of Bahia (UNEB), revealing professional and personal aspects that help to understand the current configuration of higher education teaching in Brazil, especially in the Bahian context. The data on valuing and quality of life were intertwined through the determination of statistical correlations between these variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gender analysis of the faculty revealed that 64.2% of the sample participants are women, while 35.8% are men. This finding corroborates studies indicating the feminization of teaching, even in higher education, although to a lesser extent when compared to basic education. Campos and Almeida (2019) highlight that female representation in Brazilian higher education has been increasing, rising from 41% in 1999 to 46% in 2019. In Bahia, the situation is even more significant, with 51.8% of women in universities, reflecting efforts toward gender inclusion and equity.

However, it is important to note that these data should not be interpreted in isolation. Ferreira et al. (2022) argue that an intersectional analysis is essential to understanding gender and racial asymmetries. White men still predominantly occupy spaces of power and knowledge

production, while Black women remain underrepresented, evidencing an academic system in higher education that is still racialized and gendered.

Regarding age, 72% of faculty members are between 40 and 59 years old, with 43.7% concentrated in the 50–59 age range. This profile confirms the trend observed by the Higher Education Census (Brasil, 2022), which points to a prevalence of experienced professors in the public system. The low representation of professors under 40 years old may be related to barriers to entry, such as the requirement for advanced education and the scarcity of public hiring competitions. At the same time, there is an increasing permanence of faculty over 60 years old, influenced by pension reforms and financial incentives for prolonging academic activity.

In terms of marital status, 60.9% of faculty members have a partner, and this status contributes to the division of daily tasks, as discussed by Santos (2015). According to this author, conjugal relationships in this context can foster emotional stability for professors, positively influencing their professional performance. The number of children reported also reveals relevant aspects: one-third of the faculty have no children, another third has two children, and the overall average was one child per professor. These figures may be interpreted considering academic demands, particularly in the early years of a career, as individuals attempt to reconcile professional and personal life, demonstrating again this determining correlation, as also noted by Almeida et al. (2022).

The geographic distribution analysis of faculty showed UNEB's broad presence across the territory of Bahia. The territories with the highest number of respondents were the Metropolitan Region of Salvador (105), Sertão Produtivo (56), Litoral Norte and Agreste Baiano (28), and Extremo Sul (21). This demonstrates the government institution's commitment to expanding higher education access and ensuring its reach across the state.

From a professional perspective, the data reveals a highly qualified category, with a predominance of PhDs and postdoctoral degrees, most linked to licentiate degree courses and with exclusive dedication to the institution. This profile contrasts with the reality of private higher education, where faculty with only specialization or master's degrees prevail (Almeida et al., 2022).

Regarding teaching experience, most respondents are in the variation (8–15 years) and finalization (20–25 years) stages of their careers, according to Ferreira's (2014) typology. These stages may be marked by stress, demanding routines, and disillusionment with the profession, but also by renewal and engagement, depending on the institutional support provided, as the author points out. This underscores, once again, the importance of professors feeling valued institutionally.

Finally, union engagement and awareness of valuing policies show a category that is aware of its rights and mobilized in pursuit of better working conditions. As Masetto (2020) notes, overcoming isolationism and actively participating in the construction of the pedagogical project are key elements for effective university teaching.

Table 1 - Professional Characterization of Interviewees (N=327)

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Field of Study		
Humanities	130	39,8
Health	54	16,5
Languages	42	12,8
Exact Sciences	20	6,1
Biological	27	8,3
Nature	11	3,4
Social	43	13,1
Education Level		
Specialization	6	1,8

Master's degree	98	30
Doctorate	173	52,9
Postdoctoral	50	15,3
University Teaching Experience		
1 to 10 years	48	14,7
11 to 20 years old	126	38,5
21 to 30 years old	124	37,9
31 to 40 years old	29	8,9
Employment Relationships with Higher Education Institutions		
Full-time Dedication	302	92,4
2 IES	21	6,4
3 IES	1	0,3
More than 3 Institutions	3	0,9
Undergraduate Programs		
Bachelor's degree (teaching qualification)	161	49,2
Bachelor's Degree	123	37,6
Both	43	13,1
Works in Graduate Programs		
No	174	53,2
Lato Sensu	57	17,4
Stricto Sensu	90	27,5
Both	6	1,8
Teaching Experience at Uneb		
0 to 10 years	77	23,5
11 to 20 years old	143	43,7
21 to 30 years old	90	27,5
31 to 40 years old	17	5,2
Resides in Same Municipality as Work		
No	140	42,8
Yes	187	57,2
Collaboration at Other Campuss		
No	253	77,4
Yes	74	22,6
Distance for Collaboration		
0 to 20 KM	189	57,8
21 to 100 KM	47	14,4
101 to 200 KM	46	14,1
201 to 300 KM	19	5,8
Over 300KM	26	8
Union Membership		
No	126	38,5
Yes	201	61,5
Active in Union Activities		
No	68	20,8
Yes	259	79,2
Knows Faculty Development Policies		
No	38	11,6
Yes	289	88,4
Subject Coherence with Academic Background		
No	6	1,8

Yes	321	98,2
Time Since Last Continuing Education		
0 to 5 years	199	60,9
6 to 10 years old	66	20,2
11 to 15 years old	34	10,4
Over 15 years old	28	8,6
Institution of Continuing Education		
Combinations	19	5,8
Public in-person	264	80,7
Public distance learning	11	3,4
Private in-person	29	8,9
Private distance learning	4	1,2

Source: Data Research (2024)

The profile revealed so far indicates not only a brief statistical portrait of UNEB faculty but also points to the economic–structural contradictions of Brazilian higher education. Challenges arising from the aging of faculty members, the need to commute to other campuses, and work overload for those employed in more than one institution must be considered within the context of promoting quality of life and well-being for these professionals. On the other hand, encouragement for continuing education and alignment between training and professional activity are strong points that contribute to the valuing of faculty work, particularly for UNEB professors.

Returning to the collected data, **Table 2** below provides the self-perception of valuing among these faculty members. Most respondents do not feel valued (41.9%) or feel only partially valued (32.4%). For the study participants, there is a significant gap in valuing policies: 43.7% state that there are no sufficient policies, and only 2.1% consider them sufficient. The enforcement of such policies is also questionable, with 30.6% of faculty stating that they are not enforced, and 34.6% considering enforcement partial. Only a small portion (6.4%) feel fully appreciated, indicating an urgent need for improvements in valuing policies and practices.

These data suggest a mismatch between expectations and reality regarding professional valuing for these workers, both in terms of the existence of public policies and their implementation. This gap can negatively impact individual motivation and engagement, making it necessary to review and strengthen valuing measures.

Table 2 -UNEB Faculty Valuing

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Perceives Faculty Valuing		
No	101	30,9
Insufficient	81	24,8
Partially	**121**	**37**
Yes	24	7,3
Sufficient Policies for Valuing		
No	**143**	**43,7**
Insufficient	85	26
Partially	92	28,1
Yes	7	2,1
Compliance with Valuing Policies		
No	100	30,6
Insufficient	97	29,7
Partially	**113**	**34,6**
Yes	17	5,2

Feels Valued		
No	**137**	**41,9**
Insufficient	63	19,3
Partially	106	32,4
Yes	21	6,4

Source: Research Data (2024)

As detailed by Casagrande (2020), the National Education Plan (PNE) limited itself to defining mostly quantitative goals, such as increasing the gross enrollment rate in higher education, improving quality indicators, expanding the number of master's and doctoral degree holders among active faculty, and progressively increasing enrollment in stricto sensu graduate programs. According to the author, although these goals represent important advances for structuring the system, the absence of a specific axis dedicated to the professional valuing of university professors—particularly regarding working conditions, adequate remuneration, and the social recognition of the profession—reveals a concerning gap, especially given the context of decreasing quality and devaluation of the academic career.

Still according to Casagrande (2020), increasing the number of master's and doctoral degree holders is only a potential element of qualification, not sufficient on its own to ensure professional valuing. Examining Goal 17 of the PNE, which sets this requirement primarily for basic education, one finds a flawed a premise that higher education faculties had been appreciate enough and thus does not require specific goals for this segment.

This assumption proves especially contradictory considering the reality experienced by these professionals, who are frequently the target of discourses that disqualify their work. University faculties is often accused of enjoying supposed "privileges," such as reduced working hours or high salaries, disregarding the complexity, mental workload, and multiplicity of functions that make up academic work.

Cardoso Júnior et al. (2025) argue that when work is under conditions that ensure human dignity, respecting autonomy, creativity, and individuals' time, it becomes a space for personal and social fulfillment. Under such circumstances, work becomes a field to produce meaning, fostering significant bonds both individually and collectively. In this sense, valuing can contribute to building a superior quality of life for faculty members and, consequently, better functional performance.

Entering the discussion on the importance of faculty subjectivity in education—particularly regarding the investigation into their quality of life—**Graph 1** below presents the data collected in the study.

Graph 1 - Scores of the WHOQOL-Bref Questions from the research

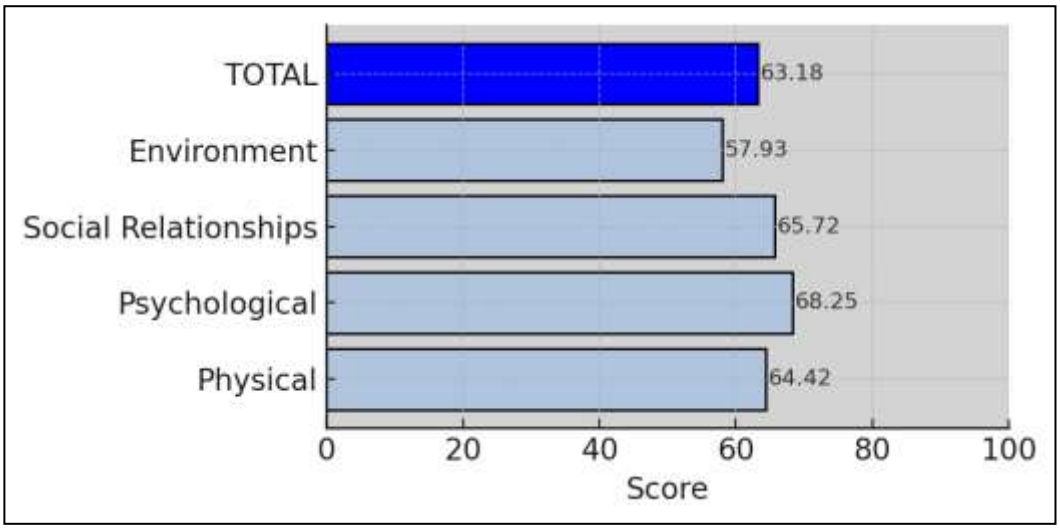
Source: Data Research (2024).

Based on the data from **Graph 1** and according to the mathematical interpretation provided by the instrument, as described by Pedroso et al. (2010), the self-assessment of overall quality of life obtained a score of 60.82. In order of highest satisfaction or frequency of specific scores, the results were: spirituality/religion and personal beliefs (79.97), mobility (75.54), body image and appearance (74.01), home environment (71.48), self-esteem (69.11), personal relationships (68.73), and personal support and assistance (68.50). Following these were work capacity (66.82), current information and skills (65.67), activities of daily living (64.76), thinking, learning, and memory (62.00), and transportation (61.16).

Below the global score were: sexual activity (59.94), energy and fatigue (58.94), physical environment (57.95), physical safety and protection (58.64), positive feelings (55.58), sleep and rest (54.13), recreation and leisure (52.60), financial resources (48.55), health care (47.40), dependence on medication or treatments (37.84), pain and discomfort (31.42), and negative feelings (31.19).

To contextualize these data, and again following the technical guidelines of Pedroso et al. (2010) for the WHOQOL-Bref instrument, it was possible to produce the graph representing these statistics and the mean scores for each quality-of-life domain as defined by the WHO for the study participants.

Graph 2– WHOQOL-Bref domain scores obtained



Source: Data Research (2024).

The resulting domain graph above shows that, among the domains established by the research instrument, the environmental domain (physical and social context in which the person lives) obtained the lowest score, at 55.93 points. The physical domain (aspects related to physical health and functional capacity) had a score of 64.42 points, the social relationships domain (focusing on connections and social support) scored 65.72 points, while the psychological domain recorded the highest score, at 68.25 points. The overall mean score across domains was 63.18 points. This confirms environmental relationships where working conditions are situated. They were perceiving the worst quality-of-life dimension among the surveyed professors.

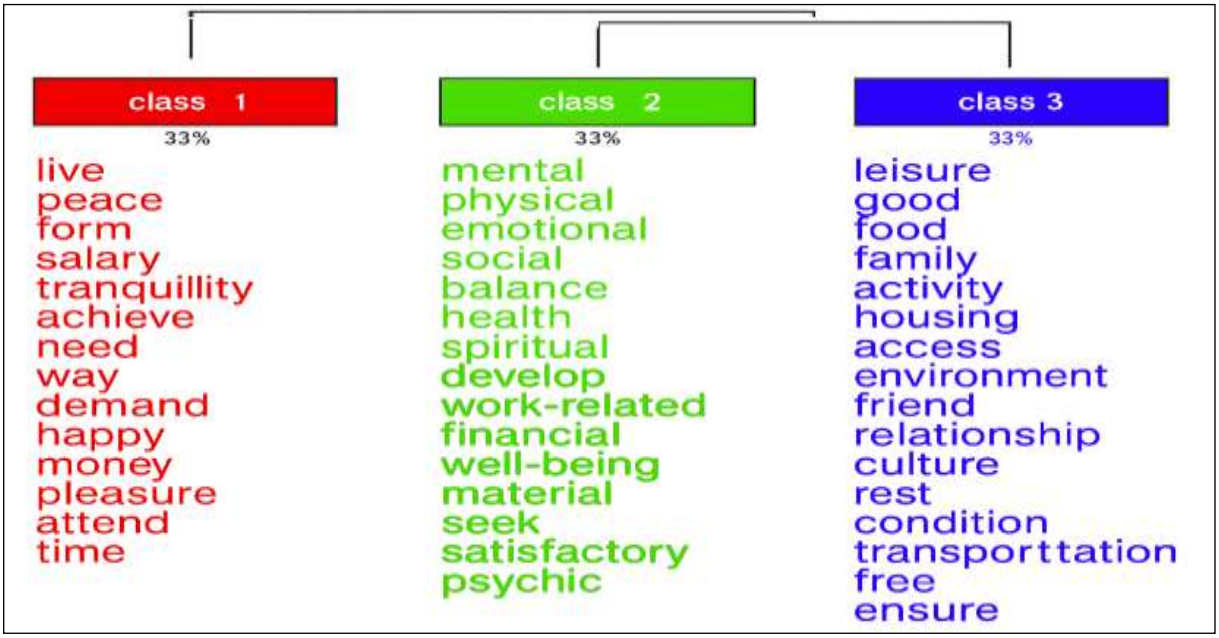
Cancian et al. (2023) also investigated the quality of life perceived by university professors across four dimensions: mental health, physical health, social relationships, and environmental relationships. These authors report that, although professors rated their quality of life as satisfactory, data on mental health reveal the vulnerability of their study population, as 40% of participants reported having some type of mental disorder, either isolated or associated, as well as signs indicative of physical and mental exhaustion from teaching.

To better understand this information regarding the category of quality of life, and to capture reality through another metric asking them to describe their concept of quality of life.

The discourse analysis generated, through software, a **hierarchical word class dendrogram (CHD)** that organized the concept of quality of life provided by the respondents into three main classes:

- **Foundational Class 1** – Focuses on the material and financial aspects of the category, highlighting the importance of economic stability for a peaceful and satisfactory life.
- **Derived Class 2** – Emphasizes health and overall well-being, including mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health, as well as work–life and financial balance.
- **Derived Class 3** – Closely related to both the first and second classes, addressing social and environmental aspects, underscoring the importance of social relationships, access to basic living conditions, and leisure and cultural activities.

Figure 1 – Dendrogram: Quality of Life as Understood by Faculty



Source: Research Data (2024)

Together, these three classes provide a comprehensive view of the quality of life investigated, integrating material, health, well-being, social, and environmental aspects. It is important to highlight here that the quality of life of the study population can, in fact, be hierarchized from a core perspective based on economic factors. From this perspective, faculty valuing (remuneration) is the primary determinant of quality of life.

When examining a **word cloud** constructed by the same discourse analysis software, there appears to be a proposal of multidimensionality for quality of life, with different weights for each dimension. However, health—both physical and mental—is the most prominently followed by aspects of social and environmental (work-related) life.

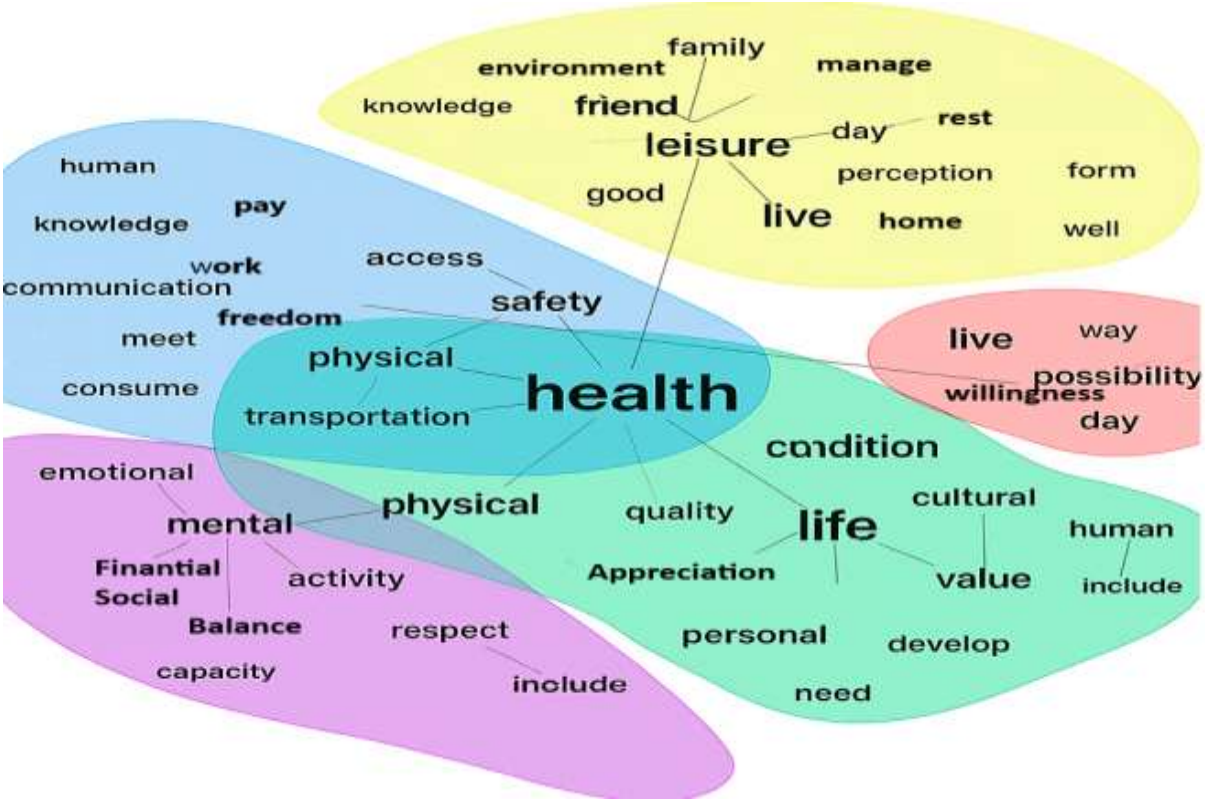
Figure 2- Word Cloud on Quality of life as understood

Source: Research Data (2024).

In the periphery of the word cloud, represented by different words (diverse concepts), appears the theme of valuing in relation to quality of life. This peripheral vision contains words reflecting the conditions or resources available as the basis for living. In this view, the centrality of the word cloud may be revealing only an apparent capture of the phenomenon. Once stripped of this appearance, it would reveal that the words pointing to financial stability are what concretely ensure the fulfillment of other essentials, needs, and comforts of life.

For example, a healthy social existence presupposes first meeting conditions that, in a world organized by capital, are eminently material.

Figure 3 – Textual similarity relations on quality of life



Source: Research Data (2024).

The similarity map above represents the connections between words and concepts associated with the perception of quality of life. The structure shows different clusters of words that share similar meanings or are frequently related. The analysis of the graph reveals a central core highlighted by the word *health*, suggesting that it is the most influential dimension in the perception of quality of life among this population.

However, it is worth noting that *health* is linked to words that mean *access*, *security*, *care*, *tranquility*, *relationship*, and *compatible plan*, which indicates that it connects to underlying conditions. It is necessary first to remove suffering and fear of immediate existential threats and the risk of social isolation through financial stability so that these professors can feel a sense of belonging.

In this same central cluster of the map, a root emerges containing words such as *pay*, *need*, that mean *consumption*, *bill*, and *supply*. That leads us back to the same reasoning drawn from the previous word cloud. Respondents abstract the idea of health from elements that are in fact economic, in nature and tied to their work activity.

Silva et al. (2020), aiming to identify the perception of professors at public educational institutions regarding envy, subjective well-being, and mental health, observed that the dedication

required for effective teaching demands considerable physical, intellectual, and emotional effort also revealed in the statements of participants in the present study.

According to these authors, the social environment, including family, friends, and colleagues, significantly influences individual perceptions of quality of life. For some, achieving a socially prominent role, giving up certain events or experiences for career advancement, and seeking socially accepted behaviors are factors associated with this conception. Faculty expressions often show an ideal of positive experiences linked to quality of life, where elements such as comfort, work, family, and tranquility encompass both emotional and health aspects (Silva et al., 2020).

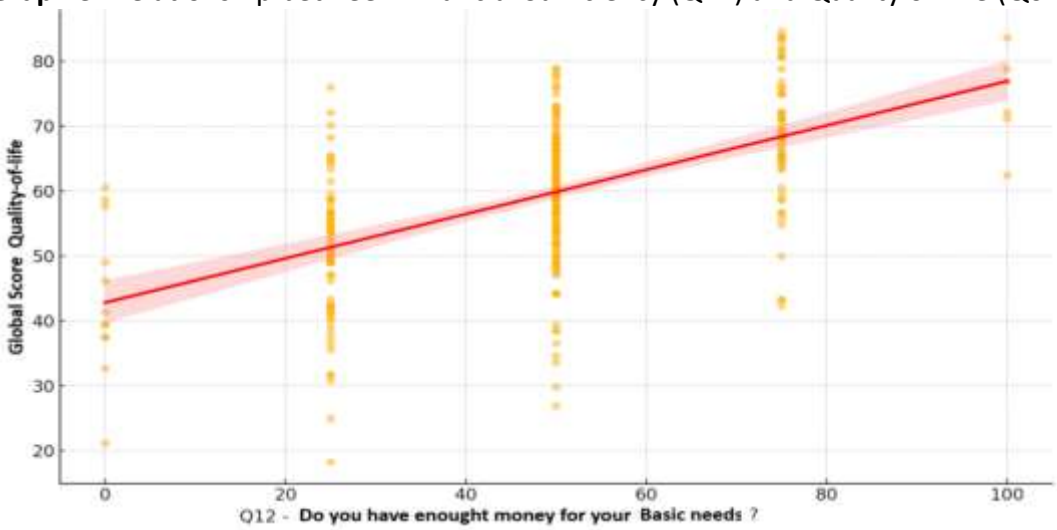
Cardoso Júnior (2022), in his research on quality of life among graduate faculty members at a public institution in Bahia during the pandemic, found results that when were compare to those discussed above, suggest that quality of life is linked to faculty valuing, which is, in turn, economically determined and shaped by each historical moment. According to the author, the pandemic exacerbated the phenomenon of faculty depreciation, already perceived beforehand, leading to a significant decline in quality of life and increasing vulnerability to illness due to work-related factors, especially for those with economic dependence.

This may again indicate that valuing (material and financial) is the primary factor for decent quality of life among the professors surveyed. Similarly, it should be noted that the concept of *life* derived from the similarity analysis is closely related to *quality*, *condition*, *dignity*, and *valuing*, while other clusters link aspects such as *mental*, *physical*, *balance*, *well-being*, *social*, and *psychological*.

The interconnectedness of these clusters reinforces the idea that none of these factors act in isolation: quality of life or faculty well-being seems to result from a balance between physical, emotional, social, and environmental conditions governed by individual material conditions.

This correlation can be statistically confirmed in **Graph 3** below.

Graph 3- Relationship between Financial Sufficiency (Q12) and Quality of Life (QoL)



Source: Data Research (2024).

In the graph, each point represents a participant, while the line indicates the general trend. As the score for Q12 (question 12 of the WHOQOL-BREF, which measures financial sufficiency) increases, the overall quality of life score also tends to increase proportionally. This demonstrates a positive correlation: the greater the perceived financial sufficiency, the higher the perceived quality of life.

In this analysis, the Pearson correlation coefficient between Q12 (financial sufficiency) and the overall quality of life score was calculated, yielding a value of 0.56 ($p < 0.001$). This value confirms a moderate-to-strong positive correlation. It suggests that the better the financial valuation, the better the actual and perceived quality of life of the surveyed faculty members.

Amid intensified debates and recent research on working conditions in education, Law No. 14,681 was enacted on September 18, 2023, during the third term of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. This legislation established the Policy for Well-being, Health, and Quality of Life at Work and the Valuing of Education Professionals, aiming to promote the integral health of workers, prevent occupational diseases in the educational environment, and foster sustainable and humanized practices geared toward faculty well-being (Brazil, 2023).

The guidelines set forth by the new legislation emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships mediated by harmony among colleagues, superiors, and subordinates, promoting collaborative work environments and encouraging the engagement of education professionals in institutional planning. Furthermore, the law proposes actions aimed at the continuous improvement of working conditions, including measures for the protection of physical and mental health, protocols to address occupational hazards and illnesses, and strategies to reduce absenteeism, ensure continuous professional development, and maintain a work–life balance.

However, the law does not explicitly address budgetary aspects such as salary adjustments, wage recovery, or structural investments. The legal text merely establishes that the Union, states, Federal District, and municipalities must, within one year from its publication, develop specific plans that address the guidelines and objectives set forth therein.

In this context, the effective valuing of the Brazilian teaching profession necessarily requires structural measures such as entry through public examinations, the establishment of a workload compatible with teaching demands, the guarantee of time reserved for planning and study, and salaries and material conditions consistent with the level of training required. As Castro Neta (2020) points out, the absence of any of these element's compromises not only the quality of teaching work but also the health and quality of life of these professionals.

CONCLUSION

The proposition of this study fosters reflection on the role of the university professor, recognizing them as an essential agent for social development. The current demands faced by this professional category constitute an opportunity to broaden the scientific debate on higher education teaching, from a critical perspective that questions hegemonic models and proposes new forms of professionalization.

Particularly in public education, the advance of neoliberal forces that work to transform all levels of education into market niches has contributed to the physical, psychological, and symbolic exhaustion of faculty. There is, indeed, a genuine pedagogy of neoliberalism that naturalizes the logic of productivity, competitiveness, and depreciation (precarious conditions).

In this scenario, the pedagogical professionalization of university faculty emerges as a necessary and urgent response within a counter-hegemonic project. Deepening research on this subject will certainly bring relevant contributions to addressing this situation.

Valuing teaching means offering professors dignified living conditions and the possibility of personal and professional fulfillment in their duties. Such valuing, however, entails a broader conception within the social organization—one in which lifetime and mental health are preserved, and recognition is effective as part of the civilizational pact, based on coherent salary policies and self-enforceable legal guarantees.

In this expanded model, the professor is no longer conceived as a mere functional resource, but is affirmed as a subject of rights, bearer of aspirations, and protagonist of social transformations. The challenge highlighted in this article is political: it concerns reclaiming teaching work as an instance of human emancipation, breaking with its instrumentalization by the logics of capital and market productivity.

Repositioning the teaching subject at the center of social priorities is, therefore, an imperative necessity. Where there is a genuine commitment to the full valuing of life, there will be

a lower risk of exhaustion and greater possibilities for qualified, creative, and socially engaged performance, all aligned with the construction of a truly just and sustainable society.

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