



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE: IMPACTS, CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES ON HEALTH PROMOTION



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**Davi Gonçalves Teixeira Saraiva<sup>1</sup>, Ingrid Paixão Langa Amaral<sup>2</sup>, Cristina Moreira Cantareli Campos<sup>3</sup>, Arthur Duarte Fantesia Costa Cruz<sup>4</sup> and Erivelton Fernandes França<sup>5</sup>.**

### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to analyze the different conceptions of quality of life present in the literature, highlighting its subjective and objective aspects. The theme addressed the complexity of the concept of quality of life, evidencing its multiple theoretical approaches and its influence on social, economic and individual conditions. The research was conducted through a literature review, according to the methodological principles of Narciso and Santana (2024), involving the selection, analysis and interpretation of academic materials extracted from the SciELO database. Specific keywords were used to ensure the relevance of the sources analyzed. The results indicated that quality of life is a dynamic and multidimensional concept, which may vary according to the context and the criteria adopted. While some approaches emphasize subjective aspects, related to individual perception, others highlight structural factors, such as access to basic resources and opportunities for development. In addition, it was found that the definition of quality of life is not static, but depends on social and cultural variables. The research allowed us to conclude that understanding this concept requires an integrated view, considering both the experience of individuals and the external conditions that influence their well-being. The need for empirical studies that complement the theoretical literature was also highlighted, enabling a more in-depth analysis of how quality of life is manifested in different population groups.

**Keywords:** Well-being. Health. Quality of Life. Physical education. Brazil.

<sup>1</sup> Graduated in Physical Education  
State University of Ceará (UECE)  
E-mail: davi.txsaraiva@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Master's student in Emerging Technologies in Education  
MUST University  
E-mail: ingridpaixaoamaral@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Master of Science in Emerging Technologies in Education  
MUST University E-mail: luiscrislara@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup> Master in Health and Development of the Midwest Region  
Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS)  
E-mail: arthur.fantesia@gmail.com

<sup>5</sup> PhD in Biomedical Engineering  
University of Mogi das Cruzes (UMC) E-mail: erivelton.fernandes@hotmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is a widely discussed concept in several areas of knowledge, including health, sociology, and psychology. Its definition encompasses multiple factors, such as social, economic, and environmental conditions, as well as individuals' subjective perception of their well-being. However, the complexity of this concept generates different interpretations, making it necessary to deepen its dimensions and applications in theory. Thus, understanding quality of life from a multidimensional perspective is essential for the formulation of public policies and for the promotion of strategies that ensure better living conditions for the population.

Given this problem, this study has the general objective of analyzing the different conceptions of quality of life present in the literature, highlighting its subjective and objective aspects. Specifically, it seeks to (i) identify how quality of life is defined in different theoretical contexts, (ii) discuss the main factors that influence the perception of quality of life and (iii) understand the relationship between quality of life and human development, considering minimum parameters that ensure adequate conditions for well-being. In this sense, the research is guided by the following question: 'How can quality of life be conceptualized and analyzed from different theoretical approaches?'

To answer this question, the methodology adopted consists of a bibliographic research, according to the methodological principles presented by Narciso and Santana (2024), which highlight the relevance of critical review in the construction of scientific knowledge. The analysis technique used is based on the interpretation and dialogue between different theoretical references that address the theme. The data were collected from academic works and scientific articles that explore the concept of quality of life, allowing the construction of a broad and grounded panorama on the subject.

The article is structured in interdependent sections. Initially, in chapter 2. Quality of Life: Concepts and Approaches, discusses the multiplicity of definitions of the concept, highlighting how different authors interpret and apply it in their research. Then in chapter 3. Results and Discussions, the main findings of the literature review are analyzed, relating them to other studies and pointing out their implications. Finally, chapter 4. Final Considerations summarizes the conclusions of the study, emphasizing the contribution of the work to the advancement of the debate on quality of life and suggesting possible paths for future research.

Therefore, by discussing quality of life from different theoretical perspectives, this study contributes to a broader and more integrated understanding of the theme, evidencing

its importance both for the academic field and for the formulation of public policies aimed at improving the living conditions of the population.

## METHODOLOGY

The research developed had a qualitative and exploratory character, based on the bibliographic review as the main method of investigation. According to Narciso and Santana (2024), bibliographic research consists of the collection, analysis, and interpretation of materials already published, allowing the construction of grounded knowledge on a given topic. Thus, the study sought to gather relevant theoretical contributions to the understanding of quality of life and its different conceptual approaches.

In this context, the methodology adopted was based on the collection of materials such as scientific articles, academic books and publications available in electronic databases, to gather information that supported the analysis of the research problem. The choice of this method allowed us to identify different perspectives on the concept of quality of life, understanding its implications and applications in various fields of knowledge. The methodological process involved four main stages: the delimitation of the theme and the research question, the search and selection of bibliographic sources, the critical analysis of the materials and the organization of the references used in the study.

The search for reliable sources was carried out in the *Scientific Electronic Library Online* (SciELO), an open-access scientific database that brings together academic journals from several countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal. This platform was chosen due to its wide availability of peer-reviewed articles, ensuring credibility and academic rigor to the study.

The selection of sources was conducted based on the use of simple and combined keywords, in order to cover different approaches to the concept of quality of life. Expressions such as '*quality of life*', '*well-being and society*', '*living conditions*' and '*quality of life and human development*' were used. This strategy enabled a targeted search, ensuring that the references analyzed were pertinent to the objective of the study.

The analysis of the materials followed a critical-reflective process, in which the selected texts were interpreted in the light of the research problem and the objectives outlined. From this analysis, it was possible to identify different theoretical perspectives and establish a dialogue between the authors, allowing a broader and deeper understanding of the theme. In this way, the bibliographic research adopted proved to be an adequate method to achieve the objectives of the study, providing a consistent theoretical basis for the discussion and reflection on quality of life and its multiple interpretations.

## QUALITY OF LIFE: CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

The concept of quality of life is broad, being influenced by different theoretical perspectives and social contexts. According to Marques and Sousa (2015, p. 4), "it can be said that quality of life means many things. It refers to the way people live, feel and understand their daily lives." In this way, it is perceived that quality of life cannot be reduced to a single fixed concept, as it is closely linked to the subjective perception of individuals about their existence and well-being.

However, this subjectivity does not prevent quality of life from being analyzed from different approaches and criteria. Vilarta and Gonçalves (2004, p. 27) emphasize that "quality of life can be differentiated according to objectives, forms of approach, observed results and interpretations appropriate to the context in which it is studied or applied." Thus, it is verified that this concept can take on different meanings depending on the field of study or the purpose of the analysis. Thus, quality of life can be understood both from an economic, social or psychological perspective, as well as from a focus more focused on health and physical well-being.

Although there are different forms of approach, it is possible to establish minimum parameters that define a satisfactory quality of life. According to Gonçalves and Vilarta (Gonçalves; Vilarta, 2004),

[...] Consider as good or excellent quality of life that which offers the minimum conditions for the individuals inserted in it to develop the maximum of their potential.

Thus, it is verified that, in addition to the subjective perception and the variation of criteria according to the context, there is a consensus on the need to guarantee basic conditions that enable full human development.

Therefore, while Marques and Sousa (n.d.) emphasize the subjective dimension of quality of life, Vilarta and Gonçalves (2004) expand this understanding by highlighting that its definition depends on the approach adopted. In addition, Gonçalves and Vilarta (Gonçalves & Vilarta, 2004) argue that, regardless of specific interpretations, quality of life can only be considered satisfactory when it provides individuals with opportunities to fully develop their potential. Thus, it becomes evident that quality of life must be analyzed in an integrated way, considering both individual perceptions and the structural conditions that enable well-being and human development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: ORIGINS AND INFLUENCES

Physical Education in Brazil has its roots deeply intertwined with medical and military institutions, which, in different historical periods, have outlined its path and purposes. According to Santos and Cardoso (2012, p.2),

[...] Physical Education in Brazil is confused at various times in its history with medical and military institutions, verifying that, at different times, these institutions define the path of Physical Education itself.

Thus, it is understood that Physical Education did not develop autonomously, but was linked to interests and needs imposed by different social and political contexts.

In this sense, the construction of a new social model required the formation of individuals who would meet the demands of the time. Soares (1992, p. 51) points out that "for this new society, it became necessary to 'build' a new man, now stronger, more agile and more enterprising." This ideal of body and behavior reinforced the need for Physical Education aimed at preparing the citizen according to the standards of efficiency and performance required by the State. In this way, Physical Education was instrumentalized as a tool for social conformation, promoting values that met both military requirements and the productive demands of the labor market.

In addition, the search for a model of Physical Education that would meet the national specificities led to the conception of a structured system that was coherent with the characteristics of the Brazilian people. Ghiraldelli (1994, p. 19) argues that "in this way it is possible to forge a 'national system of Physical Education, capable of promoting the Physical Education of Brazilian men, respecting their cultural, physical-morphological and psychological peculiarities'." This shows an effort to consolidate Physical Education as an autonomous field of knowledge adapted to the sociocultural reality of Brazil, instead of just reproducing foreign models.

In this way, it can be seen that Physical Education in Brazil has historically been shaped by institutional influences that have given it different directions over time. Initially submitted to hygienist and militaristic ideals, its consolidation as a school discipline and field of scientific research was accompanied by an effort to adapt its guidelines to national specificities. Thus, throughout its trajectory, Physical Education has acquired its contours, transiting between the requirements imposed by the State and the needs of the population, seeking, at the same time, to legitimize itself as a fundamental area for human formation.

## CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS IN DISEASE PREVENTION

The relationship between health and its determinants in Brazil is complex, requiring the formulation of effective strategies to cope with Non-Communicable Diseases and Conditions (NTD). According to Ferreira, Diettrich and Pedro (2015, p. 799), "the complex relationship between health and its determinants in Brazil imposes the challenge of finding mechanisms to cope with Non-Communicable Diseases and Injuries (NTDs)." In this sense, the increase in the rates of these diseases reinforces the need for public policies that encourage healthy habits and promote structural changes in society.

On the other hand, the adoption of an active lifestyle emerges as an essential factor for the prevention and treatment of these diseases. Araújo and Araújo (2000, p. 195) point out that

An active lifestyle, resulting from the practice of physical activity, contributes to good physical condition, and is considered by Araújo and Araújo (2000) to be one of the important factors for the prevention and treatment of diseases.

Thus, the regular practice of physical activities plays a central role in reducing the impacts of NTDs, offering an accessible and effective alternative for promoting the health of the population. However, for physical activity to have a significant impact, its promotion must be associated with broader actions that involve the reduction of vulnerabilities and health risks. As established by the Ministry of Health, it is necessary to "promote quality of life and reduce vulnerability and health risks related to its determinants and conditions" (Brasil, 2006, p. 17). This indicates that the simple recommendation of physical exercise is not enough, and it is essential to create intersectoral policies that guarantee access to adequate spaces, favorable urban infrastructure and continuous incentives for the adoption of healthy habits.

Thus, it is observed that, although the practice of physical activity is a relevant factor for the prevention of NTD, its effectiveness depends on a broader context that involves structural actions and integrated public policies. While Araújo and Araújo (2000) emphasize the importance of an active lifestyle for individual health, Ferreira, Diettrich and Pedro (2015) emphasize the complexity of the relationship between health determinants, requiring a more comprehensive approach. In this sense, the guideline established by the Ministry of Health (Brasil, 2006) corroborates the need to articulate multiple strategies to ensure the effective confrontation of NTDs, reinforcing that health promotion must be aligned with public policies that guarantee equity and access to opportunities for the entire population.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results obtained throughout this study allowed us to identify relevant aspects related to quality of life, physical activity and disease prevention, bringing significant contributions to the deepening of knowledge in these areas. The conclusions indicate that the promotion of quality of life is directly associated with the guarantee of conditions that favor the full development of individuals. This perspective is reinforced by Gonçalves and Vilarta (Gonçalves & Vilarta, 2004), who highlight that a satisfactory quality of life depends on the minimum supply of conditions that enable this development. Thus, although Marques and Sousa (2015) argue that quality of life is strongly linked to individuals' subjective perception of their existence and well-being, this study confirms that this subjective dimension cannot be dissociated from objective aspects, such as social and economic conditions that influence people's daily lives.

Another important finding was the confirmation of the essential role that the regular practice of physical activities plays in the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases and Conditions (NTD). This finding is in line with the notes of Araújo and Araújo (2000), who emphasize that an active lifestyle is a crucial factor for maintaining health. However, the study also revealed that the positive effects of this practice are enhanced when accompanied by public policies that encourage healthy habits and ensure adequate access to spaces and favorable conditions for exercising. This need for integrated actions is defended by the Ministry of Health (Brasil, 2006), which emphasizes that the simple recommendation of healthy practices is not enough if there are no initiatives that reduce social vulnerabilities and expand the population's access to favorable environments for health care.

In addition, the historical analysis of Physical Education contributed to the understanding of how this area was shaped by institutional influences over time, especially by the military and hygienist demands that marked different historical periods. This historical relationship, as Santos and Cardoso (2012) point out, shows that Physical Education in Brazil did not develop autonomously, but rather as a tool for social conformation that sought to meet the requirements of the State and the interests of body control. This perspective is reinforced by Soares (1992), who highlights that the construction of a new social model demanded the formation of strong, agile and productive individuals, consolidating Physical Education as a practice aimed not only at health, but also at the construction of a specific social behavior. These results also confirm the reflections of Ghiraldelli (1994), who emphasized that the search for a national model of Physical Education, coherent with the



Brazilian sociocultural characteristics, was an attempt to distance itself from the simple reproduction of foreign standards and adapt this area to national demands.

Although these results are in line with the scientific literature, some limitations should be considered. The complexity of the determinants of health and quality of life, as pointed out by Ferreira, Dietrich and Pedro (2015), indicates that the results cannot be generalized to all social and cultural contexts. In addition, the subjectivity involved in the perception of quality of life and the variables that interfere with the adoption of healthy habits represent methodological challenges that can influence the interpretation of the data. The historical analysis of Physical Education, in turn, faces limitations related to the fragmentation of historical sources and the possibility of divergent interpretations according to the theoretical approach adopted, as highlighted by Soares (1992).

Some unexpected results were also observed, especially with regard to the low adherence of part of the population to the practice of physical activities, even in the face of evidence about its benefits. This finding can be explained by the lack of adequate urban infrastructure and the absence of social and economic incentives that facilitate the incorporation of these habits into people's daily lives. This situation reinforces the recommendations of the Ministry of Health (Brasil, 2006), which points out that the promotion of physical activity should be associated with public policies that expand opportunities for the adoption of an active lifestyle, especially in vulnerable communities.

Based on the findings and limitations pointed out, it is recommended that future research explore in more detail the impact of specific public policies on adherence to the practice of physical activities in different socioeconomic contexts. In addition, it is necessary to deepen investigations that analyze the relationship between quality of life and intersectoral strategies involving education, health and urban infrastructure. It is also pertinent that new research addresses the subjective perception of quality of life in vulnerable populations, expanding the understanding of the factors that influence well-being in these communities. Finally, it is suggested that future investigations examine how historical models of Physical Education still influence contemporary pedagogical practices, allowing a critical reflection on their evolution and their potential for social transformation. This research can contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive policies, promoting health and quality of life broadly and sustainably.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The present study allowed us to answer the questions raised in the introduction and in the methodology, evidencing the complexity inherent to the concept of quality of life and



its relationship with different theoretical perspectives. The bibliographic analysis showed that quality of life can be understood both from a subjective perspective, based on individual perception of daily life, and from a structured perspective, considering social, economic and environmental factors. In addition, it was possible to verify that the absence of an absolute consensus on the subject reinforces the need for interdisciplinary approaches for its broader understanding. In this way, the discussions presented throughout the work corroborate the existing literature, while pointing out gaps and challenges for future research.

The objectives of the research were achieved as the literature review allowed mapping the main approaches to quality of life, identifying different definitions and parameters adopted by scholars on the subject. The study showed that, according to Marques and Sousa (2015.), quality of life is related to the way individuals live and understand their reality. At the same time, Vilarta and Gonçalves (2004) point out that its definition may vary according to the context in which it is inserted, while Gonçalves and Vilarta (Gonçalves; Vilarta, 2004) emphasizes that a satisfactory quality of life must guarantee minimum conditions for the full development of human potentialities. Thus, it was possible to conclude that quality of life should be analyzed from multiple perspectives, being influenced by both individual and structural factors.

In view of the results obtained, the research leaves relevant notes for future studies. The need for empirical investigations that complement the theoretical review is evident, since the quality of life can present significant variations according to the socioeconomic, cultural and demographic profile of the populations analyzed. In addition, longitudinal studies could contribute to a deeper understanding of the transformations in the perception of quality of life over time. Finally, interdisciplinary research, involving areas such as health, psychology, and social sciences, could provide new perspectives on the subject, enabling the development of more effective strategies for the promotion of well-being and social equity.



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