


QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK: PERCEPTION OF THE CIVIL SERVANTS OF A FEDERAL INSTITUTION

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Thâmella Hellen Estefanuto Orsiolli¹, Claudio Alexandre de Souza², Thálita Anny Estefanuto Orsiolli³ and Jorge Luis Torrejón Matos⁴

ABSTRACT

The Quality of Life at Work (QWL) has gained relevance in public administration, demanding studies that consider the particularities of this sector and the new ways of working. Thus, this research aimed to analyze the perception of the employees of a Federal Institution of Higher Education (IFES) about their QWL. To this end, a quantitative approach was used with the Quality of Working Life Questionnaire-bref (QWLQ-bref) at the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA), involving 247 respondents in person and telework. The analysis used univariate and descriptive statistics. The results reveal a satisfactory general perception, but identified deficiencies in the professional domain and wear and tear in civil servants with longer time of service. The study highlights the importance of QWL as a public management strategy and the need for organizational actions based on periodic evaluations. The practical contributions provide subsidies for strategic decisions aimed at improving QWL in the public sector, while the theoretical contributions broaden the debate on QWL in the context of public administration. The survey highlights the relevance of people management policies aligned with the specificities of the public service, promoting a more satisfactory and productive work environment in the IFES.

Keywords: Quality of Life at Work. Public administration. Perception of Servers. Telework.

¹ Master in Technologies, Management and Sustainability
Federal University of Latin American Integration – UNILA
E-mail: thamella.orsiolli@unila.edu.br

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8909-969X>
LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/2703122279912144>

² Post-Doctorate in Business Management
State University of Western Paraná – UNIOESTE
E-mail: claudio.souza@unioeste.br
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0369-1084>
LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0356316368021912>

³ Dr. in Business Administration
State University of Paraná – UNESPAR
E-mail: thalita.orsiolli@unespar.edu.br
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1796-3201>
LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/7918615958620683>

⁴ Dr. in Applied Mathematics
Federal Technological University of Paraná - UTFPR
Email: jtorrejon@professores.utfpr.edu.br
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7932-6924>
LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4655820366964509>

INTRODUCTION

Work is a relevant part of a person's constitution, favoring the growth and development of identity. It is also an essential element of human subjectivity and social perception, conferring value and purpose (Dejours, 2004). It also contributes to the survival and adaptation of the individual, encompassing personal and professional development (Costa, 2021).

Considering that a good part of a person's day is spent in a work environment, it is important to feel good in this environment and this feeling is closely linked to Quality of Life at Work (QWL) (Dessen & Paz, 2010; Freitas, Paiva, Lima & Pinto, 2019). The experience at work reflects on the lifestyle and worldview, relating to QWL (Limongi-France, 2004).

Organizations depend on the performance of their workers to develop, as their skills are used in the generation of goods or services (Rizzatti, 1995; Klein, Pereira and Lemos, 2019). In this sense, people valued in their work environment are more productive, contributing even more to organizational growth (Gil, 2001). This growth represents efficiency, quality, stability and productivity, desired in the private and public spheres. In the latter, this is evidenced by the principle of efficiency of the Federal Constitution, which encompasses quality and production (Brasil, 1988).

Research on QWL in the Brazilian public sector has unique characteristics, including its organizational structure and culture, as well as challenges faced by workers. The organizational structure in public administration is considered more restricted, with stricter controls (Souza, 2002). Also included are aspects such as the way in which public servants enter, the type of service provided to the State, regulations of the salary plan and career progression (Brasil, 1988). Contemporary challenges, such as teleworking after the COVID-19 pandemic, bring new dimensions to QWL.

In the context of Brazilian public administration, the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IFES) are also affected by decisions that can influence the QWL of their employees. Therefore, these actors' understanding of their QWL can provide a tangible measure of their job satisfaction, contributing to the development of strategies that improve the organization's experience and performance (Nunes, Carvalho, Pinheiro, Sousa & Vale, 2021).

In view of this scenario, this study aims to analyze the perception of public servants of an IFES in relation to their QWL. To this end, a quantitative approach was used, using the Quality Of Working Life Questionnaire-bref (QWLQ-bref). The study was carried out at

the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA) and included a sample of 247 respondents. Univariate statistics were used for data analysis and descriptive statistics were used to diagnose the perception of the employees in the sample in relation to their QWL.

Practical contributions are presented to the investigated institution through information that can contribute to the decision-making related to the QWL of its employees. In addition, policymakers can base themselves on the results obtained to support strategic decisions aimed at improving QWL in the public sphere. In a theoretical way, this study contributes to the understanding of the theme in a public context, provoking reflections regarding its particularity, in addition to stimulating the elaboration of new studies in IFES, as well as other bodies of the federal executive power.

QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK

QWL has received several concepts over the years. Walton (1973) believed that the term was broad and that its definition should take into account the human aspirations and needs of the time, as well as the social responsibilities of employers. He also believed that the acronym should bring together all existing movements, with a view to protecting workers and their living conditions.

According to Davis (1981), QWL encompasses the conditions in a work environment, which can be favorable or unfavorable to the employee's performance. Quirino and Xavier (1987) deepen this understanding by stating that this theme involves discussions about motivational, performance and satisfaction elements debated in the area of human resources.

With the advancement in studies, new understandings have emerged, so that for Limongi-França (1997), QWL encompasses actions of the organization in the managerial and technological spheres aimed at innovating, improving the environment so that the employee can perform his work better. In the same sense, Pilatti and Bejarano (2005) suggest that QWL is an indicator of the quality of the human experience in the work environment. Such experience takes into account the satisfaction of productive capacity in a safe context, with mutual respect and opportunity for personal and professional development.

In turn, Silva and Ferreira (2013) argue that there was a time when QWL meant the way in which the individual perceived his emotions, his satisfaction with his work and

everything around him. At another time, it was understood as the worker's perception of working conditions, physical environment, equipment and available technology.

Martel and Dupuis (2006) noted the lack of consensus in the definition of QWL, while Klein et al. (2019) pointed to the evolution of the concept, emphasizing the improvement of its meaning. Based on this, QWL is seen as a broad and dynamic concept, challenging to be uniquely conceptualized due to its adaptive nature to social and organizational changes (Klein et al., 2019).

According to the discussion developed, it is perceived that the concept of QWL is determined by its evolution and complexity, assuming characteristics adaptable to the social and organizational context in which it is being analyzed. Thus, QWL is understood in this research as the result of relational conditions (personal, health, psychological and professional point of view) permeated in the federal institution investigated that reflect on the performance of the work of its employees. Therefore, the favorable and unfavorable aspects of a given work environment (Pilatti, 2012) are evaluated based on the individual's perception.

QWL ASSESSMENT

The QWL assessment is relevant because it is an indicator of the quality of human experience in the workplace (Pilatti & Bejarano, 2005). In addition, it seeks to understand the variables that influence this environment and its consequences for the worker and the organization (Ceribelli, Ceribelli & Ferreira, 2016).

Fernandes (1996) already defended the importance of this evaluation, highlighting its role in providing data on the impacts on QWL, which could lead to a positive cycle of increased productivity and improvement. Thus, evaluation came to be seen as a diagnosis for organizational improvement (Caravantes & Bjur, 1996; Medeiros & Ferreira, 2011; Aketch, Odera, Chepkuto & Okaka, 2012; Ahmad, 2013; Lee, Dai, Park & McCreary, 2013).

However, the investigation of QWL requires a robust theoretical foundation, with emphasis on the pioneering model of Walton (1973), contemplating eight dimensions. Following this line, Hackman and Oldhan (1975) proposed a model centered on elements such as workers' skills and autonomy in the workplace. As the field of study expanded, subsequent models, such as those proposed by Westley (1979) and by Werther and Davis (1983), broadened the view on QWL, incorporating economic, social, psychological, and sociological aspects.

In Brazil, Fernandes (1996) developed a model adapted to the national context, identifying nine dimensions for QWL, including health, participation and morale. Similarly, Limongi-França (1996) emphasized the importance of biological, psychological, social and organizational factors. Ferreira (2011) introduced an ergonomic perspective to QWL, analyzing it under two distinct cousins: macroergonomic and ergonomic microdesign.

Practical assessment instruments, such as the *Job Diagnostic Survey* (JDS) by Hackman and Oldham (1975), the Operational Audit of Human Resources by Fernandes (1996), and the Biopsychosocial and Organizational Analysis (BPSO-96) by Limongi-França (1996), were developed to transform theoretical concepts into measurable data. It is also worth mentioning the instrument entitled Quality of Working Life Questionnaire (QWLQ-78), the result of the dissertation by Reis Junior (2008), which includes four domains – physical/health, psychological, personal and professional – and their respective indicators. Such domains are represented by sets of questions in the measurement instruments, which are related to specific areas of human behavior or condition (Alves, 2010).

It should be clarified that the QWL assessment can be performed qualitatively or quantitatively, the latter being the focus of this research. In this case, a measurement instrument is required that is capable of capturing subjective data and transforming them into numbers, which are translated into information. In this way, it is possible to carry out diagnosis, monitoring, comparison and analysis of the impact of interventions (Alves, 2010).

Thus, for an effective assessment of QWL, it is necessary that the instrument be based on some model, as is the case with the QWLQ-78, the model that served as the basis for the abbreviated version used in this study. This, in turn, will define the parameters to be investigated, which are expressed through indicators covering human dimensions.

For the investigation of this theme, it is suggested that, in addition to a reliable instrument, a methodology that considers the understanding of each person should be used, as only the worker is capable of knowing about his or her own QWL (Fernandes, 1996). Thus, the employee's understanding of working conditions and satisfaction needs to be constantly evaluated. This occurs both so that such circumstances can be analyzed and reviewed and to serve as a basis for decision-making and management direction, based on the elements that reflect and those that are contained in the work environment.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

To carry out this study, a quantitative and descriptive approach was adopted, as it used numerical data collection and the use of statistical techniques, in order to portray the characteristics of a given phenomenon (Gil, 2010; Knechtel, 2014). In this sense, a closed questionnaire was applied to data collection consisting of 30 questions, with answers on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from very unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, neutral, satisfactory and very satisfactory.

The instrument chosen was the *Quality of Working Life Questionnaire-bref* (QWLQ-bref), an abbreviated version of the *Quality of Working Life Questionnaire* (QWLQ-78), developed by Reis Junior (2008) and adapted by Cheremeta, Pedroso, Pilatti & Kovaleski (2011). The QWLQ-bref has twenty items, subdivided into four domains: physical/health, psychological, personal and professional (Facchini, Areão & Lenk, 2015). The abbreviated version brings with it practically the same indicators as the instrument that originated it, as detailed in Figure 1. In order for the respondent not to identify the domain being evaluated, the QWLQ-bref questions were arranged in random order (Cheremeta et al., 2011).

Figure 1: Indicators evaluated in the QWLQ-bref.

Domínio	Indicadores
Físico/Saúde	Aspectos relacionados à saúde; interligados com a teoria de Maslow; satisfação das necessidades fisiológicas básicas; sobrevivência do indivíduo; estresse; repouso.
Psicológico	Aspectos de satisfação pessoal; motivação para realizar bem o trabalho; possibilidade de se expressar sem medo de punições; orgulho da profissão e das atividades que desempenha.
Pessoal	Aspectos familiares; crenças pessoais; autorrealização; autoestima; relacionamento interpessoal no trabalho; relacionamento entre família-indivíduo-trabalho.
Profissional	Aspectos organizacionais que podem interferir na vida dos colaboradores.

Source: based on Reis Junior (2008) and Cheremeta et al. (2011).

The study was carried out at UNILA, IFES of an autarchic legal nature, maintained by the Union and linked to the Ministry of Education (MEC), with headquarters and jurisdiction in the municipality of Foz do Iguaçu, in the State of Paraná. Data collection took place from March 15 to April 3, 2023 and included a universe of 827 civil servants, with a total of 247 respondents in its non-probabilistic sample.

All federal public servants were invited to participate in the survey, without category restrictions, as long as they were working. The questionnaire was made available electronically via *Google Forms*, allowing the segmentation of the questions into blocks. The first block aimed to collect information regarding the sociodemographic and professional profile. In the second block, there was a transcription of the QWLQ-bref and

the scale of responses, with only the term "company" being replaced by "institution", to adapt to the public context.

In the data analysis, the univariate statistical technique was used, which is the association of metric data with descriptive statistics (Malhotra, 2011). Although the questionnaire was validated, Cronbach's alpha test was applied to verify the reliability of the instrument. The value obtained was $\alpha = 0.920$, indicating, according to Freitas and Rodrigues (2005), a very high internal consistency.

After verifying reliability, descriptive statistics were used to diagnose the perception of the civil servants in the sample in relation to their QWL. Next, the calculation of the scores of each dimension and the overall level of QWL was analyzed. The QWLQ-bref classification scale of the QWLQ-bref classification levels follows the same classification proposed by Reis Junior (2008) in the QWLQ-78, in which the values are presented on a centesimal scale ranging from 0 to 100, shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: QWL Classification Levels

<i>QWLQ-bref</i>				
Muito Insatisfatório	Insatisfatório	Neutro	Satisfatório	Muito Satisfatório
0 a 22,5	22,5 a 45	45 a 55	55 a 77,5	77,5 a 100

Fonte: Reis Junior (2008, p.80).

It is important to emphasize that there were no omitted values, and it is not necessary to disregard any questionnaire answered. Finally, the processing of the information occurred through an electronic spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel®, whose syntax was created and made available by Cheremeta et al. (2011).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows an overview of the aspects of the respondents' profile, with the respective numbers and percentages.

Table 1: General profile of respondents

Variable	Alternative	N	Percentage
Sex	Female	147	59,5%
	Male	100	40,5%
Age group	18 to 30 years old	13	5,3%
	31 to 40 years	121	49,0%
	41 to 50 years old	83	33,6%
	51 to 60 years old	29	11,7%
	over 60 years old	1	0,4%
Education (Education Level)	Middle school	4	1,6%
	Higher education	14	5,7%
	Specialization	104	42,1%
	Masters	68	27,5%
	Doctorate	42	17%
	Postdoctoral fellow	15	6,1%
Level of position held	Level D	107	43,3%
	Tier E	96	38,9%
	Teacher	44	17,8%
Length of service in the institution	1 to 3 years	18	7,3%
	4 to 6 years	26	10,5%
	7 to 9 years	125	50,6%
	10 to 12 years	55	22,3%
	Over 12 years old	23	9,3%
Type of work	Face	103	41,7%
	Partial Teleworking	67	27,1%
	Integral Teleworking	77	31,2%
Holds a leadership position	No	182	73,7%
	Yes	65	26,3%

Source: Authors (2024).

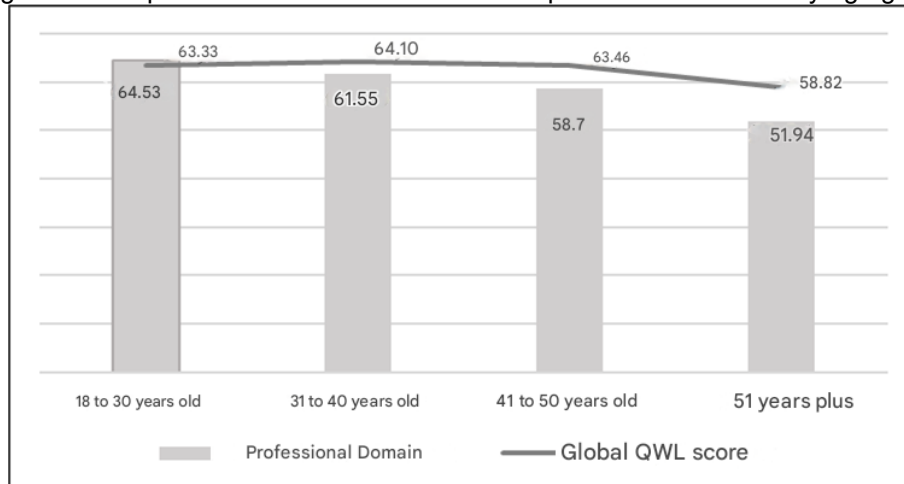
In general, the profile of the respondents had a greater representation of the female sex, prevalence of the group that was in the age group of 31 to 40 years, with specialization, level D position, have between 7 and 9 years of service in the institution, are in face-to-face work and do not occupy a management position.

According to Table 1, heterogeneity is observed in terms of gender, which was also found by Tedodoro (2018), when assessing the QWL of Administrative Technicians in Education (TAE) at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), and Santos (2019), in a study at the Federal University of the Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys (UFVJM). Regarding the general QWL, males had an index of 63.62 and females of 62.92. Although these levels are satisfactory (Figure 2), it is understood that males have better perceptions than females.

Regarding the age group, there is a greater predominance of civil servants who are at full productive capacity, being able to contribute for a longer time to the public service. The intersection of the total indices of the professional domain and QWL in the different age groups is represented by Figure 3. Due to the low representativeness of the group

over 60 years of age and to facilitate the exposure of the data, this group was joined to the immediately previous one, forming the group 51 years older. Satisfactory values were observed for all individuals between 18 and 50 years of age in the professional domain and general QWL.

Figure 3: Comparison of the level of QWL in the professional domain by age group



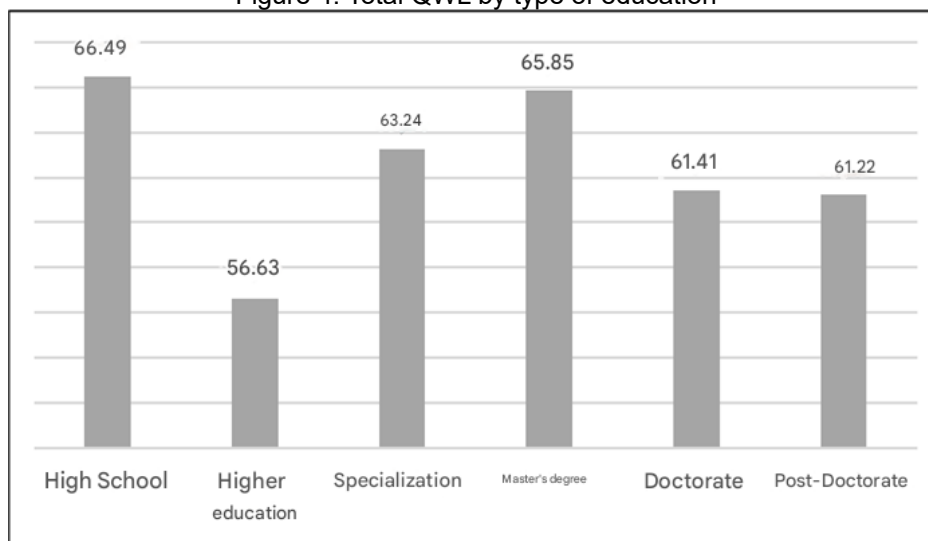
Source: Authors (2023).

According to Figure 3, there is a decrease in the QWL value in the professional domain as age advances, being considered neutral from 51 years onwards, with 51.94. This suggests that the older the individual, the more work experiences they have had, making the individual more critical of this. Furthermore, the result found contradicts the study by Herrera and Manrique (2008), in which it was found that satisfaction increases proportionally with advancing age.

Regarding complete academic training and level of the position held, it was found that the sample has a good level of education, similar to that found in the studies by Teodoro (2018) and Santos (2019). In general, regardless of the level occupied, it was found that the civil servants have training above the minimum required for the position. This is probably related to the search for knowledge or the salary increase.

The level of education can also influence the perception of QWL of each person, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Total QWL by type of education



Source: Authors (2023).

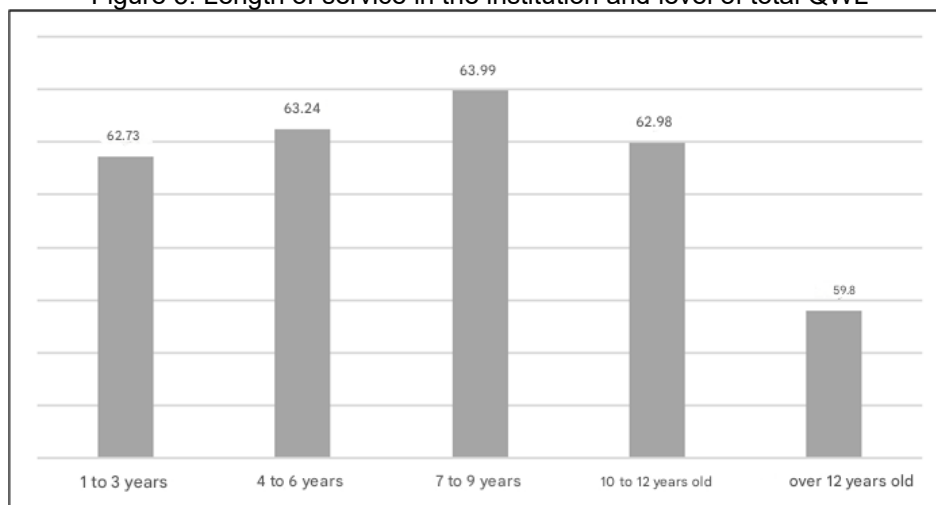
Following the order of education, Figure 4 shows a higher level of total QWL for those with high school education, with a drastic drop in the group with higher education, approaching neutrality. Then there is a slight increase for specialization and master's degrees, and a decrease proportional to the level of education from the doctorate onwards.

Klein et al. (2019) conducted a study in a public organization to analyze QWL evaluation parameters and the perception of civil servants in relation to these factors. In the end, they found that individuals with a higher level of education have a different perception and are more critical of QWL. This understanding was also perceived by Gonçalves et al. (2021), in which lower QWL satisfaction was identified in groups with a higher level of education.

Amorim (2010), when evaluating the level of QWL perceived by the employees of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State (MPE) of Pernambuco, found that schooling is related to autonomy. This, in turn, concerns the ability to govern oneself by one's own means, that is, the individual acts with freedom in the execution of tasks and decision-making. For the author, schooling is a variable that interferes with the QWL of the civil servant, from the moment he demands more autonomy.

Regarding the length of service in the institution, although the IFES surveyed has been in existence for thirteen years, it was observed that 50.6% of the sample has worked between 7 and 9 years in that organization. Mourão, Kilimnik and Fernandes (2005) suggest that there is a relationship between the length of service in the institution and QWL. The cross-referencing of data between these two variables is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Length of service in the institution and level of total QWL

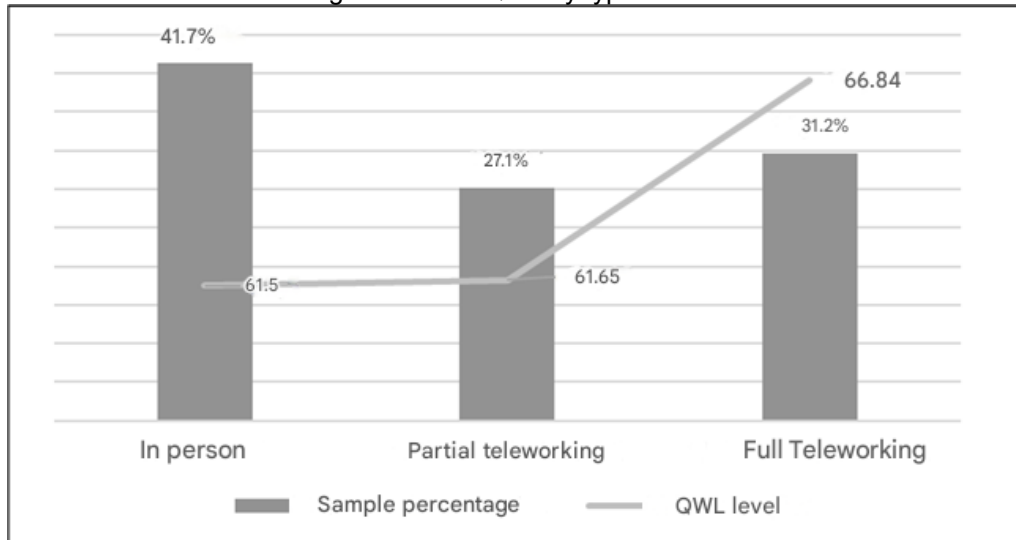


Source: Authors (2023).

Figure 5 identifies that all values are satisfactory. However, there is a higher QWL score in the groups from 1 to 12 years of service, with a decrease of more than 12 years, suggesting exhaustion of older workers in relation to the domains evaluated. This result is similar to that of Mourão et al. (2005), in a study with employees of the Dean of Personnel at the University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). The authors found greater satisfaction with QWL in civil servants with up to 15 years of service in the institution and a decrease above this time. Similarly, Gonçalves et al. (2021), when finding higher QWL averages in the group of civil servants who had been working for more than six months in a public higher education institution.

Regarding the work regime, the questionnaire included the options of partial telework, full telework and face-to-face, the latter with the highest representation of participants (41.7%). When contrasting the level of total QWL by type of work, the following result is obtained, shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Total QWL by type of work

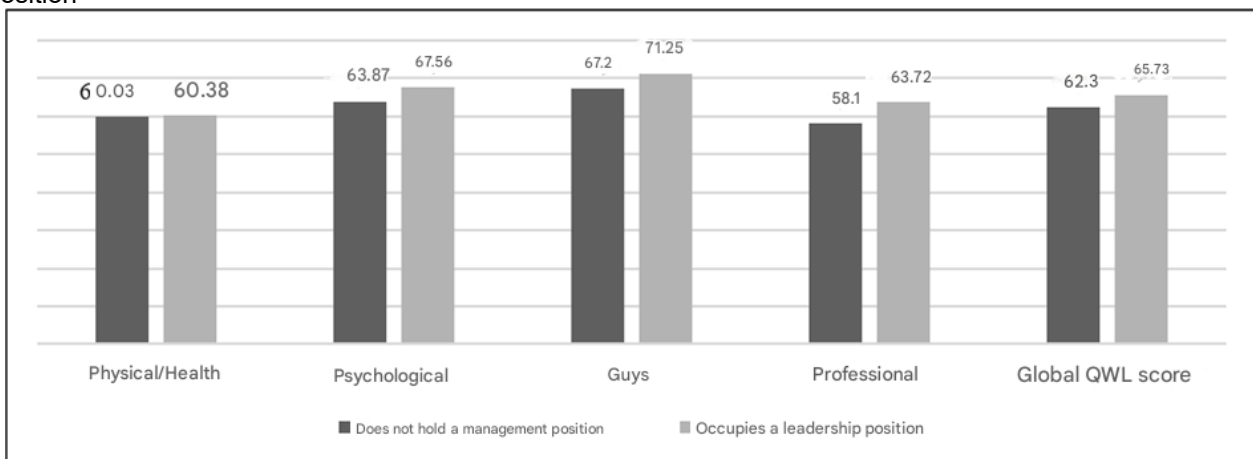


Source: Authors (2023).

Figure 6 shows that the total QWL levels are considered satisfactory for all work modes. It is also noted that there is greater satisfaction for the group that works fully away from the physical premises of the institution, in full telework. According to Rocha and Amador (2018), telecommuting creates opportunities and encourages employees to perform their duties in a more innovative and creative way, positively impacting the individual's QWL. All these elements may have contributed to the group in full-time telework achieving the highest score.

Although not initially foreseen, it was considered appropriate to analyze the perception of all QWL domains for the groups that occupy and do not occupy leadership positions, represented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Comparison of the perception of QWL in the groups that occupy and do not occupy a management position



Source: Authors (2023).

Although there is a greater predominance of non-occupants of management positions (73.7%), Figure 7 shows that for all the domains evaluated there is greater satisfaction of those who occupy management positions. In other words, those who hold a management position have a more positive view of QWL, which may be related to the benefits arising from this position. The position of leadership brings with it greater salary, prestige, respect, autonomy, participation in decisions, and freedom of expression (Gonçalves et al., 2021). Therefore, this leads to better QWL levels.

Following the proposed methodology, the second block of the form consisted of the QWLQ-bref requirements. Thus, the data were analyzed by cluster, without separating the categories or forms of work. To this end, the syntax provided by the researchers who developed the instrument was used. In this sense, Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Survey after application of the QWLQ-bref

Domain	Average	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation (CV)	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Amplitude
Physical/Health	3,405	0,679	19,929	1,500	5,000	3,500
Psychological	3,594	0,780	21,698	1,000	5,000	4,000
Staff	3,731	0,698	18,719	1,750	5,000	3,250
Professional	3,383	0,705	20,852	1,556	5,000	3,444
QVT	3,528	0,609	17,267	1,653	5,000	3,347

Source: Authors (2023).

As shown in Table 2, the descriptive statistics included the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, minimum value, maximum value, and amplitude, for each domain, and total QWL. The second column of the table indicates the arithmetic mean of all the answers in each domain, whose highest averages were respectively for the personal (3.731) and psychological (3.594) averages. Regarding the standard deviation, which is the dispersion of data within a sample, it has a value of less than three. According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham (2009), this suggests that the sample is homogeneous and the data are less dispersed.

To compare the degree of concentration around the mean, the VC is used, which can be expressed as a percentage, whose values remained between 15 and 30%. In other words, the data from all domains and the total QWL were distributed with a medium dispersion (Medri, 2011). In addition, the four dimensions and the global QWL practically reached the extreme values of the response scale, according to the last three columns of

the table mentioned above. Therefore, Table 3 shows the correlation matrix between the four dimensions.

Table 3: Pearson's correlation index of dimensions

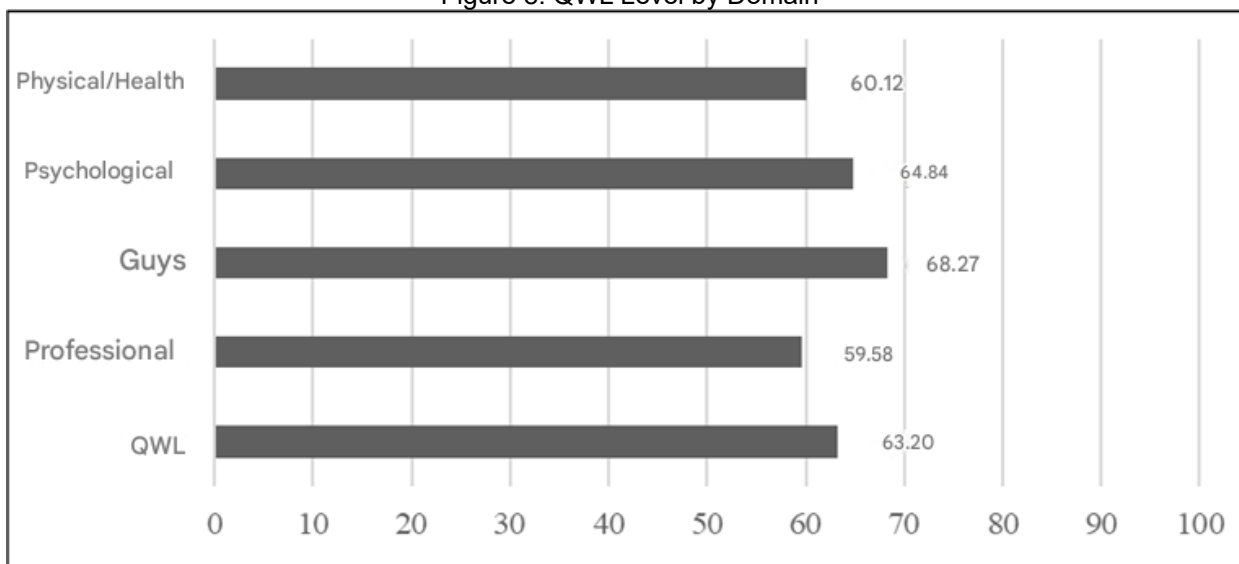
	1	2	3	4	5
Physical/Health (1)					
Psychological (2)	0,528482				
Personal (3)	0,450252	0,748891			
Professional (4)	0,477489	0,739848	0,823857		
QWL (5)	0,714822	0,895943	0,890091	0,895297	

Source: Authors (2023).

Pearson's correlation index, presented in the last line of Table 3, shows a strong correlation between the domains and with the total QWL. According to Souza, Alexandre and Guirardello (2017, p. 654) "values close to 1.00 indicate that there is a correlation, while values close to 0.00 indicate that there is no correlation. Correlation coefficients of 0.70 or higher are desirable [...]". The values highlighted in this study are above 0.71.

The perception of QWL of the sample is represented by the level of satisfaction and is arranged in Figure 8 on a centesimal scale to facilitate interpretation.

Figure 8: QWL Level by Domain



Source: Authors (2023).

Although all domains and the global QWL have satisfactory indexes, it is pertinent to mention some notes. The Physical/Health dimension had the second lowest score (60.12). Furthermore, this dimension is closely related to the theory proposed by Maslow, with a

hierarchical division of individual needs. These involve personal and professional needs, ranging from the most basic to the most complex (Matsuoka & Silva, 2013). This dimension also reflects the intertwining of the different constructs of Quality of Life (QoL) and QWL. This suggests that organizational outcomes can be impacted by the individual's physical and mental health (Garlet, Beuron, & Scherer, 2017).

As for the Psychological domain, the second highest score was obtained (64.84). Werther and Davis (1983) believe that this dimension is the individual's expectation in relation to the work performed. For Reis Junior (2008), motivation can be the result of a good QWL, and is also interpreted by the degree of motivation that a person has to perform his or her job well (Hackman & Oldhan, 1975).

Other factors such as self-esteem and personal satisfaction are considered by Machado, Perito, Treptow & Drago (2018) as essential for motivation at work. This is also related to Maslow and Herzberg's theory, because the greater the satisfaction of the individual, the more productive and creative he will be (Gaki, Kontodimopoulos & Niaka, 2013). However, when the person perceives his work negatively, psychological suffering sets in, leading him to think that the environment in which he finds himself and what he does are irrelevant (Morin, 2008).

Pride in their work/profession and freedom of expression may have corroborated the level reached, as they are great influencers of QWL (Westley, 1979). Such indicators seem to be in line with stability, which is guaranteed to statutory public servants.

According to Pedroso (2010), freedom of expression is the exposure of opinions and thoughts freely and without punishment. In this way, the civil servant feels free and at the same time protected to make suggestions and complaints in the work environment, without fear of reprisal. In addition, it is free to report any irregularities to the competent bodies, following the legal and constitutional principles that guide its performance. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve and encourage the right to express oneself, contributing to a healthier work environment (Teodoro, 2018).

The personal domain reached the highest index (68.27), suggesting that UNILA employees are satisfied with the work-family relationship. It can be deduced that this relationship is harmonious, without negative interference from personal (family) life to professional life and vice versa. It is also assumed that there is a good relationship and respect between colleagues and superiors (Cheremeta et al., 2011; Facchini et al., 2015; Machado et al., 2018).

In the work environment, a good relationship with other colleagues, whether they are of the same hierarchical level or not, contributes to the process of integration between people. This favors, according to Sá (2015), the construction of teams to act in a committed and cohesive way, building a pleasant and trusting environment.

According to Neri (1995), personal mastery is related to meeting the worker's expectations. For the author, these expectations are still, simultaneously and comprehensively, interconnected with work, organization and other people (Nahas, 2001). In addition, it includes individual indicators, and is then the responsibility of each person, making it easier to obtain satisfactory levels of QWL in this dimension. In other words, the success of personal mastery depends on each individual and not solely on the organization (Reis Junior, 2008).

As for the professional dimension, the lowest score was observed (59.58), being the closest to neutrality. Succinctly, this domain encompasses all factors that can interfere with the professional's quality of life, such as the development of skills and professional and/or career progression (Rieger, 2002; Reis Junior, Pilatti & Pedroso, 2011; Machado et al., 2018). Thus, the greatest responsibility for this dimension lies with the organization itself, therefore, employees are subordinated to the working conditions offered (Reis Junior, 2008).

This leads to the understanding that when it comes to this dimension, workers do not depend exclusively on themselves to increase QWL. In addition, the professional dimension includes indicators that reflect the organizational effort in search of improving the QWL of its employees. In this way, the institution's attitudes end up generating so much influence in this domain, that no matter how great the individual effort, there is no way to be sure of success (Reis Junior, 2008). Therefore, it is clear that UNILA can dedicate itself to understanding the needs of its employees in order to enable them to have better physical, environmental and professional advancement conditions.

The total QWL score, whose value was 63.20, shows that the evaluated civil servants have a perception considered satisfactory. This value is similar to the 61.15 found by Pinto, Pedroso and Pilatti (2014), when they evaluated the QWL of employees of a public Higher Education Institution with the TQWL-42. It is understood, therefore, that the values obtained in the Physical/Health, Psychological and Personal domains may have contributed positively to the total QWL score of the participants.

Although the respondents had a satisfactory perception, the professional dimension seemed to have been the one that most compromised the total QWL score. In addition, as previously stated, the professional index is closer to neutrality, suggesting attention to some indicators regarding the feeling of accomplishment of civil servants with the opportunity for professional growth. This can be exemplified by the lower total QWL value of respondents with higher education in relation to the other levels, except for those with secondary education.

On the other hand, it is possible to infer that the respondents have a positive perception of their general QWL, even in the face of the challenges faced in the daily work of IFES. Despite the satisfactory values for all dimensions, it is important that the public organization considers QWL as an administrative management strategy (Oliveira, Walter, Pinho & Amorim, 2013; Sá, 2015; Klein et al., 2019; Gonçalves et al., 2021).

In this way, the investigated institution must listen to its employees, understand their needs and continuously seek improvements in processes that will reflect on QWL. It is emphasized, therefore, that this theme needs to be debated continuously by managers and coordinators of various sectors, with the idea of being present in a broader context at the organizational level and not only in the people management sector. Although QWL is an individual and subjective experience, it is essential to understand this perception in order to develop organizational actions aimed at improving this quality (Fernandes & Gutierrez, 1988; Pilatti & Bejarano, 2005; Timossi, Pedroso, Pilatti & Francisco, 2009; Pedroso, 2010; Sampaio, 2012).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the perception of public servants of an IFES about their QWL. The results obtained reinforce the importance of the evaluation of QWL as a strategic mechanism of administrative management, intervening positively in decision-making and in the implementation of policies aimed at the development of a beneficial environment for workers and the institution.

In general, it was revealed by the survey that the respondents of the investigated IFES have a positive perception of their QWL, especially in the Physical/Health, Psychological and Personal domains, which is a promising indicator. In the professional domain, when obtaining a score close to neutrality, it was found that the institution needs more actions aimed at understanding and meeting the physical, environmental and

professional conditions of its employees. A trend of decline in satisfaction was also observed among civil servants with more than twelve years of service in the aforementioned IFES. This suggests the need for special attention in order to avoid burnout and promote the sustainability of long-term job satisfaction.

It is understood that QWL is a subjective experience, which is reflected in the individual's perception of the favorable and unfavorable aspects for the performance of their functions in the work environment. Based on this, civil servants may feel changes specifically in professional conditions, when direct management and even relational areas are changed, when a new law or ordinance comes into force, when the physical environment and the possibilities of autonomy, participation in decisions, professional growth, among others, are restricted.

Thus, the perception of QWL can be modified according to situations that have occurred, causing its understanding to be periodically reviewed. It is also noteworthy that the result presented portrays the reality of the researched institution in the period of the investigation, which preceded the election to the Rectory, consequently, the change of managers is a factor that can alter the results found.

In this scenario, it is imperative that IFES continue to value and invest in the QWL of their employees, not only as a measure of satisfaction, but also as a pillar for the efficiency and quality of the services provided. Therefore, QWL emerges as a central component of organizational excellence, directly reflecting on institutional efficiency.

It should also be noted that QWL in the Brazilian public sector has unique characteristics, differentiating itself from the private sector in terms of structure, organizational culture and challenges faced by employees. This directly influences the QWL of the servers. Therefore, it is up to the IFES to recognize and address these singularities when developing and applying QWL policies.

Specific practical contributions to UNILA are evidenced through the diagnosis of the QWL of the civil servants, providing complementary data to those that the institution already has and information that can support the institutional decision-making process. In general, policymakers can take advantage of the results of this study for analysis and strategic decision-making related to QWL in the public service, covering both the IFES and other bodies of the federal executive branch.

In theoretical terms, the study contributes to the dissemination of knowledge about QWL in a public context and stimulates critical reflections on the challenges and

particularities of IFES, especially in a post-pandemic scenario that challenges traditional work structures. The current scenario requires IFES to adapt and innovate in their people management practices, considering the new work dynamics and the expectations of their employees.

This study contributes to future research exploring the relationship between QWL and other factors, such as the influence of telework and new management profiles. In addition, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be carried out that can monitor the evolution of QWL over time and the effectiveness of the interventions performed.

Finally, it is necessary for IFES to maintain a solid commitment to the provision of increasingly better services, without neglecting the QWL of their servers. After all, they are the ones that make up the basis of organizational functioning and are a fundamental element for its success.

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