

A CRISE DA ESTRUTURA FAMILIAR E SEUS IMPACTOS NA SAÚDE MENTAL DOS PROFESSORES DA EDUCAÇÃO BÁSICA: UMA ANÁLISE DOS DESAFIOS CONTEMPORÂNEOS DA PROFISSÃO DOCENTE¹

THE CRISIS OF FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ITS IMPACTS ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

LA CRISIS DE LA ESTRUCTURA FAMILIAR Y SUS IMPACTOS EN LA SALUD MENTAL DE LOS DOCENTES DE EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA: UN ANÁLISIS DE LOS DESAFÍOS CONTEMPORÁNEOS DE LA PROFESIÓN DOCENTE

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RESUMO

O presente artigo analisa a correlação entre a fragilização da estrutura familiar na formação ética das crianças e o crescente esgotamento emocional dos professores da educação básica. Por meio de revisão bibliográfica e análise de dados estatísticos recentes, demonstra-se como a ausência de limites e valores no ambiente familiar tem transferido para a escola responsabilidades que excedem sua função primária, resultando em sobrecarga profissional e deterioração da saúde mental docente. Propõe-se uma reflexão crítica sobre a necessidade de reequilibrar as responsabilidades entre família e escola para preservar a sustentabilidade da profissão docente.

Palavras-chave: estrutura familiar; saúde mental docente; burnout; educação básica.

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the correlation between the weakening of family structure in children's ethical development and the growing emotional exhaustion of basic education teachers. Through a literature review and analysis of recent statistical data, it demonstrates how the lack of boundaries and values in the family environment has transferred responsibilities to the school that exceed its primary function, resulting in professional overload and deterioration of teachers' mental health. It proposes a critical reflection on the need to rebalance the responsibilities between family and school to preserve the sustainability of the teaching profession.

Keywords: family structure; teacher mental health; burnout; basic education.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la correlación entre el debilitamiento de la estructura familiar en el desarrollo ético infantil y el creciente agotamiento emocional del profesorado de educación básica. Mediante una revisión bibliográfica y el análisis de datos estadísticos recientes, se demuestra cómo la falta de límites y valores en el entorno familiar ha transferido a la escuela responsabilidades que exceden su función principal, lo que resulta en una sobrecarga profesional y el deterioro de la salud mental del profesorado. Propone una reflexión crítica sobre la necesidad de reequilibrar las responsabilidades entre la familia y la escuela para preservar la sostenibilidad de la profesión docente.

Palabras clave: estructura familiar; salud mental docente; agotamiento profesional; educación básica.

1 INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession is experiencing one of the most severe crises in its history, characterized by alarming levels of emotional exhaustion, occupational

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stress, and career abandonment. Recent data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2024) indicate that Brazil has one of the highest rates of burnout among teachers around the world, with devastating consequences for educational quality and the sustainability of the education system.

This multifaceted crisis finds one of its deepest roots in the transformation of contemporary family structures and the resulting weakening of children's ethical development. As noted Aries (2006), the changes in family patterns that have occurred in recent decades have fundamentally altered the dynamics of primary socialization, transferring responsibilities that traditionally belonged to the family nucleus to the school.

The lack of clear boundaries in family education represents one of the greatest challenges facing educational institutions today. When parents don't establish consistent behavioral standards at home, children develop a distorted perception of their place in the world and arrive at school with inappropriate expectations about their relationships with others.

This child, accustomed to having their wishes immediately met and rarely confronted with the word "no," builds a worldview in which their individual will trumps collective needs. They genuinely believe they can do whatever they want, whenever they want, without considering the consequences of their actions for themselves or others.

The school environment, by its nature, demands cooperation, mutual respect, and acceptance of community rules. When a child without boundaries encounters these demands, shock is inevitable. They don't understand why they must wait their turn, why they can't interrupt class when they want to speak, or why they must follow established schedules and routines.

Even more serious is the belief that one's personal will is more important than the established social order. This mindset not only harms the learning environment for everyone but also compromises the child's own development. They miss out on fundamental opportunities to learn about coexistence, empathy, and social responsibility.

The consequences of this scenario are, indeed, disastrous. Teachers are forced to devote excessive time and energy to behavioral management, to the

detriment of the teaching-learning process. Other students' right to education is undermined by constant interruptions and disorganization. And children without limits themselves face constant frustrations, conflicts, and relationship difficulties that could have been avoided with a more structured education from an early age.

Education based on clear and loving boundaries is not authoritarianism — it's preparation for life. It's teaching that individual freedom exists within a social context, that rights come with responsibilities, and that respect for others is fundamental to harmonious coexistence. When parents neglect this responsibility, the entire society pays the price.

This study posits that the lack of adequate family structure for children's ethical development has caused extreme suffering for elementary school teachers, manifesting itself in challenging, disrespectful, and egocentric behaviors among students. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the attitude of parents who, often driven by feelings of guilt stemming from their absence or excessive permissiveness, fail to adequately support the school's disciplinary and formative work.

2 CONTEMPORARY FAMILY TRANSFORMATION AND THE TEACHING CLASS

Giddens (2012) analyzes the profound transformations undergone by the family institution in postmodern societies, characterized by increasing individualization, the flexibilization of parental roles, and the weakening of traditional authority structures. These changes, implemented without restraint, have produced harmful consequences for children's socialization.

Sennett (2012) complements this analysis by highlighting how the "corrosion of character" in contemporary societies has affected families' ability to transmit solid values and establish clear boundaries. The author argues that the instability of modern social relations hinders the construction of coherent narratives of moral formation, leaving children without consistent ethical frameworks.

Baumrind (1991), in his seminal studies on parenting styles, identifies the emergence of parenting patterns characterized by excessive permissiveness and parents' difficulty in setting appropriate limits. This parenting style, often motivated by a desire to avoid conflict or guilt resulting from physical absence, has produced generations of children with significant difficulties in self-regulation and respect for social norms.

Twenge (2017), in his analysis of generations born in the digital age, documents the significant increase in narcissistic and egocentric traits among children and adolescents, relating this phenomenon to family educational practices excessively focused on the immediate satisfaction of children's desires.

The immediate result of this scenario is an overload faced by the teaching class, which has been diagnosed as syndrome burnout. Blame it Leiter (2016) define the syndrome of burnout as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting from prolonged exposure to occupational stress. In the educational context, this syndrome manifests itself through three main dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

Carlotto (2010) identifies specific factors that contribute to the development of burnout among Brazilian teachers, including work overload, lack of institutional support, disruptive student behavior, and conflicts with parents. The author highlights that the intensification of these factors in recent decades has made the teaching profession progressively more unhealthy and less attractive.

3 THE ETHICAL CRISIS IN CONTEMPORARY FAMILY FORMATION

The contemporary family faces unprecedented challenges in setting limits and implementing consistent consequences for inappropriate behavior. Rosen (2010) documents how the "superspecial child syndrome" has produced children unable to deal with frustration, criticism or failure, characteristics essential for the development of emotional maturity.

This lack of boundaries manifests itself in a particularly problematic way in the school environment, where teachers are faced with students who have never experienced consistent consequences for their inappropriate behavior. As noted, Gottman (2011), children raised without clear boundaries develop significant difficulties with emotional self-regulation, becoming prone to explosive, disrespectful and manipulative behavior.

German (2012) analyzes how contemporary schools have been overburdened with functions that traditionally belonged to the family, including moral education, the development of basic social skills, and character formation. This transfer of responsibilities occurs without corresponding social recognition or institutional support, creating unrealistic expectations about the role of teachers.

The problem intensifies when parents abdicate their parental authority, expecting the school to fully assume responsibility for their children's disciplinary training, but simultaneously question or disapprove of the disciplinary measures adopted by educators. This contradiction creates an extremely stressful work environment for teachers.

Juice of Honor (2011) identifies the "parental guilt complex" as a characteristic phenomenon of contemporary families, particularly among parents who spend long hours away from home due to professional demands. This feeling of guilt manifests itself through inappropriate compensatory behaviors, including excessive permissiveness, immediate satisfaction of all children's desires, and a reluctance to set necessary limits.

When these parents are confronted with their children's behavioral problems at school, guilt often turns into defensiveness, leading them to question the teachers' competence or minimize the severity of inappropriate behavior. This attitude deprives children of the corrective feedback essential for their moral development.

4 IMPACTS ON TEACHERS' MENTAL HEALTH

Research carried out by National Confederation of Education Workers (CNTE, 2018) reveals that 78% of Brazilian teachers experience symptoms of occupational stress, while 52% have developed some work-related mental disorder. These rates, significantly higher than the averages for other professions, highlight the severity of the crisis in teachers' mental health.

The international study Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2019) positions Brazil as the country with the highest percentage of teachers reporting high levels of stress related to student behavior, with 67% of Brazilian educators reporting this difficulty, compared to the international average of 34%.

Garcia and Benevides-Pereira (2003) catalog the main manifestations of the syndrome burnout among teachers, including physical symptoms (chronic fatigue, sleep disorders, persistent headaches), emotional symptoms (irritability, anxiety, depression) and behavioral symptoms (absenteeism, social isolation, decreased quality of work).

Huberman (1995) describes how emotional burnout among teachers creates a vicious cycle of professional deterioration. Emotionally exhausted teachers become less tolerant, less creative, and less able to establish positive relationships with students, which in turn intensifies problematic behaviors and increases occupational stress.

This cycle is particularly devastating when combined with a lack of family and institutional support. Teachers who lack adequate support from their students' parents and school administration develop feelings of isolation and powerlessness that accelerate the process of burnout.

5 EVASION FROM THE TEACHING PROFESSION: A SYSTEMIC PROBLEM

Data from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP, 2020) reveal that 23% of Brazilian teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their careers, a rate that rises to 40% considering the first ten years. This turnover rate is significantly higher than that observed in developed countries and poses a serious threat to educational quality.

Particularly significant is the report by these professionals about the impossibility of carrying out their educational role adequately due to the constant need to manage disruptive behaviors and mediate conflicts that should have been resolved within the family environment.

The massive attrition of experienced teachers creates serious systemic consequences for educational quality. Ingersoll (2001) demonstrates how high teacher turnover compromises the continuity of pedagogical processes, reduces the cohesion of school teams and overloads remaining teachers with additional responsibilities.

Furthermore, the deteriorating reputation of the teaching profession has discouraged talented young people from entering the career, creating a cycle of qualitative decline that threatens the sustainability of the education system.

6 CONSEQUENCES FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Dubet (2003) analyzes how the presence of systemic disruptive behaviors fundamentally compromises the quality of the learning environment. Classrooms where teachers must devote a disproportionate amount of time to managing

inappropriate behaviors experience a significant reduction in the time dedicated to effective teaching.

This deterioration affects not only students with problematic behaviors, but the entire class, depriving well-behaved students of adequate learning opportunities and creating a climate of tension and anxiety that compromises the educational process.

When teachers are emotionally exhausted and focused primarily on disciplinary control, their ability to promote the comprehensive development of students is severely compromised. Fundamental aspects of education, such as the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and ethical values, are relegated to the background.

Paradoxically, the students who most need consistent adult role models and clear boundaries are the most harmed by this process, perpetuating cycles of poor development that will extend into adulthood.

7 PROPOSALS FOR INTERVENTION AND REBALANCING

It is essential to establish clear partnership protocols between families and schools that define each institution's specific responsibilities in children's education. This partnership should include explicit agreements on disciplinary matters, behavioral expectations, and intervention procedures.

Parenting programs can be implemented to empower families to set appropriate limits and develop consistent ethical values. These initiatives should specifically address the challenges of contemporary parenting and provide practical strategies for dealing with problematic behaviors.

Educational institutions should implement comprehensive psychological support programs for teachers, including preventive monitoring, support groups, stress management training, and self-care strategies. These programs should be recognized as an essential investment in educational quality.

Furthermore, it is necessary to establish clear protocols for early identification of symptoms of burnout and appropriate referral for specialized treatment, preventing emotional exhaustion from developing into more severe mental disorders.

Educational policies must explicitly recognize the limits of the school's role and establish clear guidelines on family responsibilities in the ethical formation of children. This reformulation must include mechanisms for holding parents accountable for persistent inappropriate behavior.

At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen institutional support for teachers, including reducing excessive bureaucracy, improving working conditions, and establishing effective disciplinary support systems.

8 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The mental health crisis among basic education teachers represents one of the most pressing challenges facing the Brazilian education system. The evidence presented demonstrates a clear correlation between the weakening of family structures in children's ethical development and the increasing emotional exhaustion of teachers.

The inadequate transfer of responsibilities from the family to the school, combined with the emergence of overly permissive parenting patterns, has created an unsustainable educational environment that compromises both the health of teachers and the quality of education offered to students.

The alarming rates of burnout, occupational stress, and teacher dropout highlight the urgent need for systemic interventions that rebalance the responsibilities between family and school. Without this rebalancing, the Brazilian education system will face a sustainability crisis that will irreversibly compromise the education of future generations.

The solution to this crisis requires social recognition of the severity of the problem, the implementation of appropriate public policies, and, fundamentally, a cultural shift that restores the value of educational authority and the effective partnership between families and schools. Only through this transformation will it be possible to preserve the dignity of the teaching profession and ensure a healthy and productive educational environment for all involved.

The silent suffering of thousands of Brazilian teachers cannot continue to be ignored. The time has come to courageously address the structural causes of this crisis and implement the necessary changes to restore the sustainability and effectiveness of basic education in the country.

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