HOME OFFICE AND COVID-19: A STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK WITH WOMEN PROFESSIONALS

HOME OFFICE E COVID-19: UM ESTUDO SOBRE A QUALIDADE DE VIDA NO TRABALHO COM PROFISSIONAIS MULHERES

HOME OFFICE Y COVID-19: UN ESTUDIO SOBRE LA CALIDAD DE VIDA EN EL TRABAJO CON MUJERES PROFESIONALES

ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze the quality of life at work (QOL) of workers from various positions and occupations, under a *home office work* regime, comprising as they process of adaptation to the context imposed by the pandemic of COVID-19.

Design/method/approach: Descriptive schist, with a qualitative approach, using the online interview, with a semi-structured script as a data collection technique. The snowball technique was used to reach the eight women who were on a home office basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were analyzed through content analysis, with categories defined a priori.

Results: It should identify the adaptation of workers to the COVID-19 pandemic and *the home office*, the influence of this work regime on personal and professional routine, quality of life (QOL) and QOL, and the impacts on physical and mental health, which depend mainly on the context in which each worker lives and works. It was observed that the greatest impact on the lives of professionals was not *the home office*, but the pandemic as a whole, which brought a mixture of feelings and challenges.

Originality/value: The value of the study lies in its theory, practical and social contribution to working with dilemmas and *challenges of the home office* experienced in the pandemic moment. Moreover, the work will give organizations greater attention to the well-being of workers, rethinking qoL and QOV issues that automatically affect a healthier and happier society

Keywords: Quality of life at work. Home office. Covid-19. Health.

Maiara Rauber de Freitas
Bachelor
University of Passo Fundo – Brazil
165329@upf.br

Maira Sgarbossa
Master
University of Passo Fundo – Brazil
maira.sgarbossa@hotmail.com

Anelise Rebelato Mozzato
Phd
University of Passo Fundo – Brazil
anerebe@upf.br

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar a qualidade de vida no trabalho (QVT) de trabalhadoras de diversos cargos e ocupações, em regime de trabalho *home office*, compreendendo como foi o processo de adaptação ao contexto imposto pela pandemia da covid-19.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: Pesquisa descritiva, com abordagem qualitativa, utilizando-se da entrevista *on-line*, com roteiro semiestruturado como técnica de coleta de dados. Valeu-se da técnica bola de neve para se chegar nas oito mulheres que estavam em regime *home office* em virtude da pandemia da covid-19. Os dados foram verificados por meio da análise de conteúdo, com categorias definidas *a priori*.

Resultados: Permitem identificar a adaptação das trabalhadoras frente à pandemia da covid-19 e ao *home office*, a influência desse regime de trabalho na rotina pessoal e profissional, na qualidade de vida (QV) e QVT e os impactos na saúde física e mental, os quais dependem, sobretudo, do contexto em que cada trabalhadora vive e trabalha. Observou-se que o maior impacto na vida das profissionais não foi o *home office*, mas a pandemia como um todo, que trouxe um misto de sentimentos e desafios.

Originalidade/valor: O valor do estudo está na sua contribuição teórica, prática e social ao trabalhar com dilemas e desafios do *home office* vivenciados no momento pandêmico. Ademais, o trabalho enseja às organizações maior atenção ao bem-estar dos trabalhadores, repensando questões relacionadas a QV e QVT que, automaticamente, repercute em uma sociedade mais saudável e feliz.

Palavras-chave: Qualidade de vida no trabalho. *Home office*. Covid-19. Saúde.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Analizar la calidad de vida en el trabajo (CVT) de los trabajadores de diversos puestos y ocupaciones, bajo un régimen de *trabajo en el home office*, que comprende como ielproceso de adaptación al contexto impuesto por la pandemia del covid-19.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Cista descriptivo, con enfoque cualitativo, utilizando la entrevista online, con guión semiestructurado como técnica de recolección de datos. La técnica de bola de nieve se utilizó para llegar a las ocho mujeres que estaban en *una oficina en casa* debido a la pandemia de covid-19. Los datos fueron analizados a través del análisis de contenido, con categorías definidas a priori.

Resultados: Debe identificar la adaptación de los trabajadores a la pandemia de covid-19 y al home office, la influencia de este régimen de trabajo en la rutina personal y profesional, la calidad de vida (CV) y la CV, y los impactos en la salud física y mental, que dependen principalmente del contexto en el que vive y trabaja cada trabajador. Se observó que el mayor impacto en la vida de los profesionales no fue el home office, sino la pandemia en su conjunto, que trajo una mezcla de sentimientos y desafíos.

Originalidad/valor: El valor del estudio radica en su contribución teórica, práctica y social para trabajar con dilemas y *desafíos del home office* experimentados en el momento de pandemia. Además, el trabajo dará a las organizaciones una mayor atención al bienestar de los trabajadores, repensando los problemas relacionados con la CV y la QVT que automáticamente repercute en una sociedad más sana y feliz.

Palabras clave: Calidad de vida en el trabajo. Oficina en casa. Covid-19. Salud.

INTRODUCTION

Home office or teleworking refers, in short, to work outside the company environment. Home office, in literal translation, means "office at home" (Google Translate, 2021), refers to carrying out work at home, as if the worker were allocated to a company, which, in Trope's view (1999), consists of taking work to people, instead of people going to work. Teleworking was regulated by law in Brazil in 2017, with the inclusion of articles 75-A to 75-E in the CLT. "Teleworking is considered to be the provision of services predominantly outside the employer's premises, with the use of information and communication technologies that, by their nature, do not constitute external work" (Brasil, 2017, s/p). To this end, in this study, the term home office is used to the detriment of others, as it is a concept under construction and an emerging theme, in a reality in which organizations of different sizes and locations have to compete for market space at a worldwide level.

The home office work modality, despite not being new, became better known due to the covid-19 pandemic in the years 2020/2021, which began to be compulsorily adhered to during this period, by workers and companies with activities considered non-essential during the covid-19 pandemic, as established in Law no. 13.979/20. This modality, adhered to the exceptional contingencies, allowed work to be carried out in the home space, which, in the view of Taschetto and Froehlich (2019), consists of work practices that are different from conventional ones, with greater autonomy, flexibility and opportunities for teleworkers. This situation led the Brazilian government to create a provisional measure, on March 22, 2020, to regulate, even temporarily, this specific work situation.

It is understood that, just like any other type of work, the home office has its pros and cons and, for the work to be effective, greater adaptability on the part of the worker is necessary, considering that the work is carried out in the same space as the home. Brooks et al. (2020) and Gondim and Borges (2020) highlight that in times of social isolation, many professionals had to quickly adapt to this new way of working. Workers who had never thought they could work from home began to carry out their activities in this way. Such a change, according to Gondim and Borges (2020) and Tenório (2021), can cause a tangle of emotions and additional effort by the worker, in order to adapt to the new working condition. This condition interferes with the quality of life (QOL) and quality of work life (QWL) of professionals.

QOL is understood as "the individual's perception of his position in life, in the context of his culture and the value system in which he lives and in relation to his expectations, his standards and his concerns" (The Whoqol Group, 1995, p 1403). In turn, QWL is defined by Limongi-França (1997, p. 80) as a "set of actions by a company that involves the implementation of managerial and technological improvements and innovations in the work environment". Several authors (Andrade, Limongi-França & Stefano, 2019; Barcaui & Limongi-França, 2014; Ferreira, 2017; Ferreira & Falcão, 2020; Limongi-França, 1996, 2006; Lopes et al., 2021; Rodrigues, 2007; Rodrigues et al., 2020) show in their studies that QWL is a concern for organizations, in order to offer an adequate work environment to their workers, aiming at productivity, without significantly draining their professionals. According to Limongi-França (1996), the construction of QWL occurs from the moment people are looked at as a whole, through the so-called biopsychosocial approach. Thus, even though QOL and QWL are distinct from each other, they are related and influence each other, so that setbacks at work can cause imbalances in family life and social relationships outside of work, as well as personal conflicts hindering the work activity (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Borges-Andrade & Sampaio, 2020; Lopes et al., 2021).

In the pandemic context, it can be seen that many organizations reinvented themselves, tested and improved methods to maintain their productivity and earnings, even when physically distant from their workers (Backes, Arias, Storopoli, & Ramos, 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2020). To this end, as Ferreira (2017) states, a possible way to obtain greater productivity and business competitiveness is to make efforts to promote the improvement of QWL, aiming to increase worker satisfaction, motivation and commitment. In this logic, Abbad and Legentil

(2020) highlight that offering conditions for friendship and companionship relationships between co-workers to be maintained during the period of social distancing is an important measure. However, it is known that the reality for millions of people may differ from this, since not everyone has the opportunity to work in places that include actions or programs aimed at QWL, or even adapt them to the new reality. In this way, QWL can help generate conditions that stimulate workers' performance, favoring their professional performance and productivity, through a harmonious and more attractive work environment (Brooks et al., 2020; Diniz, Correia, Silva, & Damorim, 2012; Limongi-França & Arellano, 2013; Silva, Cabral, Santos & Silva, 2021).

Therefore, in this context, different approaches to the topic emerge, and for this study, the perspective of the Biopsychosocial and Organizational Approach (BPSO) of QWL was chosen. This approach, based on studies by Limongi-França (1996), portrays the concern with the human being in an integral way (biological, psychological and social potentialities), adopting a broad view of the concept of health, which act, concomitantly, in the conditions of life. This concept emphasizes that health is not just the absence of disease, but also complete biological, psychological and social well-being, already established by the World Health Organization in the 1980s (Limongi-França, 2015). Considering the biological, psychological, social and organizational aspects in the work space is relevant, as they contribute to the integral and indivisible training of the worker (Brooks et al., 2020; Kramer & Kramer, 2020; Limongi-França, 2015; Silva et al., 2016). Furthermore, it enables the identification and expansion of strategies aimed at satisfying demands, building well-being as an organizational culture and rescuing human needs, giving legitimacy to the sustainable development of work, with social and community credibility, psychosocial integration, appreciation of ergonomic conditions, continuous training and providing the opportunity to map needs and expectations through the psychological contract (Alfenas & Ruiz, 2015; Limongi-França, 2015).

In view of the above, this exploratory research with a qualitative approach aims to analyze the QWL of workers who occupy different positions and occupations, working from home, understanding the process of adapting to the context imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Therefore, this article is organized into five sections. After this introduction, the literature review is presented, focusing on QWL and the home office. Next, the methodological procedures are outlined, followed by the section that presents the empirical results. Finally, the conclusions follow.

QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK AND HOME OFFICE

QWL consists of a set of actions carried out by the company, in order to implement improvements, managerial, technological and structural innovations in the work environment, with the aim of enabling balance between individuals and the organization (Ferreira, 2017; Ferreira, Alves, & Tostes, 2009). In this understanding, Limongi-França (1996, 2006) highlights that favoring conditions, such as human development, good interpersonal relationships and well-being for workers, is essential for obtaining QWL. With a focus on positive results, it is necessary to invest in workers in order to provide a harmonious environment, capable of increasing productivity and emotional commitment, promoting the updating of knowledge and reducing absenteeism (Barcaui & Limongi-França, 2014; Furtado , 2022; Limongi-França & Rodrigues, 2002; Lopes et al., 2021; Oliveira & Tosta, 2020; Shirrmeister & França, 2012), including in the covid-19 pandemic, as Carnevalea and Hatak (2020) point out, highlighting the importance of people management (PM).

It is in this context that the relevance of care for QOL is inserted, which despite numerous approaches and conceptualizations, can be understood as a synonym for physical and emotional health (Brooks et al., 2020; Fleck et al., 1999; Rossi et al., 2005) which must, primarily, be analyzed based on each person's individual perception (Gill & Feisntein, 1994). More specifically, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that QoL reflects individuals' perception that their needs are being met or, even, that they are being denied opportunities to achieve happiness and self-realization, independently of their

physical health status or social and economic conditions (WHO, 1998). Furthermore, Carracedo, Puertas and Marti (2022) reveal that future research involving Covid-19 and its repercussions need to work on proposing actions that can improve people's QOL.

However, in home office work, QWL is not focused on the organization's environment, but rather on the home environment, the "new space" of work, as Trope (1999) already highlighted. In this sense, Gondim and Borges (2020) state that the home itself has become, for many workers, the place of work, affecting, to different degrees, the routine of life and relationships with their family members. The pandemic reality experienced imposed the home office regime on certain segments and brought new challenges to the organizations' PM. How to monitor productivity, tasks and, at the same time, maintain focus, synergy and worker morale? How to promote QWL remotely? How to offer the necessary support for the work and for the worker? How to take all operations into the worker's home? There are many questions that need answers.

It is at this moment that personal routine and work routine mix and "get confused". Personal routine, understood as a pattern of behavior/activities maintained repeatedly over time and without much variation, such as, for example, going to work, having lunch at noon, doing physical activities, going to the park, meeting family and/or friends, etc. (Abbad & Legentil,2020; Gondim & Borges 2020; Limongi-França,1996, 2006; Martins et al., 2020; Nunes & Mascarenhas, 2016; Rodrigues et al. 2020). Therefore, the work routine is an organized sequence of activities carried out by professionals during their workday, with the aim of organizing and optimizing tasks in general, which need to be carried out on a daily basis (Aderaldo et al. 2017; Belzunegui -Eraso & Erro--Garcés 2020; Borges-Andrade & Sampaio 2020; Pérez-Nebra et al. 2020; Sandall & Mourão 2020). Although there is a clear difference between routines, the home space, whose activities of caring for the home, oneself and family, resting, meeting friends, "gives space" for work.

Gondim and Borges (2020) point out that, in sectors where home office was already a reality, the adaptation process was facilitated, with fewer negative and visible impacts on other spheres of workers' lives. As the authors refer, due to the previous existence of this type of work, it is understood that many organizations were already briefly adapted, with a portion of their workers already in this type of work. However, others had never faced this reality and had to adapt abruptly, looking for quick solutions so that their workers could perform their work tasks in the best way. QWL is necessarily a condition that is built in the interaction of the individual with the collective (Ferreira & Falcão, 2020; Lopes et al., 2021; Nunes & Mascarenhas, 2016) which presents itself as an evolving multidimensional method, whose focus is on elevating the humanization of the work infrastructure that arise from shared criteria or subjective and individual aspects (Limongi-França, 1997, 2012; Nunes & Mascarenhas, 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2016; Tolfo & Piccinini, 2001). Therefore, in the context of the current crisis triggered by Covid-19, several professional occupations were impacted in an extreme way, with developments in QWL, impacting the well--being of workers (Brooks et al., 2020; Carnevalea & Hatak, 2020; Carracedo, Puertas & Marti, 2022; Kramer & Kramer, 2020).

In this understanding, Borges-Andrade and Sampaio (2020) highlight that those who continued with work activities, it was essential to reinvent them or were forced to do them, without necessarily maintaining the quality of their performance, monetary remuneration, or well-being, personal or familiar. Furthermore, Sandall and Mourão (2020) highlight that in the home office, QWL can be impaired due to the number of people living in the same space (children, animals, elderly people), which sometimes become causes of "conflicts" between work and family space.

It is in this context that looking at the relationship between home office and QWL versus QOL is highlighted. The first relationship established concerns the challenges/impacts on worker satisfaction with their duties and the relationship developed with the environment and work, as a means to enhance productivity and the quality of the results presented. These aspects are ideal for building a healthy organizational culture, which values workers and cares about the results delivered. Furthermore, the second relationship (home office versus QOL) advocates conditions

that involve physical, mental, psychological and emotional well-being, social relationships, such as family and friends, health, education and other parameters that affect human life. (Abbad & Legentil, 2020; Barcaui & Limongi-França, 2014; Brooks et al., 2020; Ferreira & Falcão, 2020; Kramer & Kramer, 2020; Limongi-França & Stefano, 2019; Martins et al., 2020; Rodrigues et al. 2020; Rossi et al., 2005; Tenório, 2021).

Furthermore, in other directions, Tenório (2021) emphasizes the lack of ergonomic structure necessary to exercise the profession, since many workers do not have the same structure offered in the organization, such as an office with an adequate table and chair, computers, refrigeration, internet and other necessary technological resources. Each worker faces and lives a reality, which often differs greatly from what was offered in the organization (Oliveira & Tosta, 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2020).

Taking into account the challenges faced by workers and organizations at this time of changes in working conditions (Kramer & Kramer, 2020; Tenório; 2021), Barlach, Limongi-França and Malvezzi (2008) already emphasized that adaptability is necessary, whether in the mental, physical, technological or ergonomic aspects. Therefore, as each worker and company has a reality, it is understood that it can be complex to measure how, in fact, this has affected the world and work. According to Sandall and Mourão (2020), a "good practice" for leaders and managers, not only in this period of compulsory home office, but especially in it, is to clearly distinguish what depends on the worker and what depends on extra systems and resources. Moreover, this distinction between what is, in fact, performance and what are work demands and resources, in addition to the constant exercise of a frank and empathetic dialogue, will provide clues for managers to define where and how to intervene, the authors maintain.

Home office and the impact of covid-19

It is undeniable that the covid-19 pandemic caused many organizations and workers in activities considered non-essential (Law no. 13.979/20), to carry out compulsory home office, especially in the months of April to July 2020, when there was an exponential increase in cases of contamination by the virus. As Tenório (2021) reinforces, this regime, already existing in Brazilian legislation, was adopted on a large scale as an alternative to social distancing. Rodrigues, Moscon, Queiroz and Silva (2020) and Taschetto and Froehlich (2019) state that, for those who maintained their work relationships, their routines were suddenly substantially changed. Also according to Rodrigues et al. (2020) and Taschetto and Froehlich (2019), remote work, which was already emerging as a trend, needed to be adopted quickly and without the ideal preparation and resources for its effectiveness. The pandemic accelerated the digitalization process of companies and professions.

In this sense, it is observed that "in less than a quarter, many arrangements that would take years to transform needed to be quickly adapted to deal with the challenges posed by the developments of the pandemic" (Rodrigues et al., 2020, p. 11). The authors also emphasize that, when carrying out work in the home space, the excessive use of information technology has generated social training for other forms of relationships, for life and for virtual work. However, the pressure for better time management also seems to be growing, with or without the intervention of organizational processes (Rodrigues et al., 2020). In this logic, Brooks et al. (2020) and Sandall and Mourão (2020) point out that, in addition to the individual's self-demand in relation to their work, there are chances of intensification and increase in hours worked. There are reports of professionals who have increased their working hours and realize that "work has no end".

Specificities must be considered, such as the style of managers, flexibility in relation to goals and volume of work, in addition to different evaluation policies for each work context (Lopes et al., 2021; Pérez-Nebra, Carlotto & Sticca, 2020). Therefore, given the new format of life and work imposed by the pandemic, a lot had to be adapted, and home office workers face major challenges, such as the use of technology, time management, division between family and work, for example. Furthermore, Martins, Aguiar and Bastos (2020) state that the teleworker began to assume an important role in making personal and professional demands compatible, in addition to

the existence of an inevitable physical proximity to the family, accompanied by interruptions resulting from the family's difficulty in understanding the configuration of this abruptly adopted modality.

Therefore, Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés (2020) and Rodrigues et al. (2020) state that workers are expected to transform the meaning and role of work in their lives, which will have an impact on the bonds between work, the organization and the family, since the boundaries between these extensions are poorly defined. In line with this, Gondim and Borges (2020) state that the meaning and meaning of work are being rethought in the current pandemic moment.

As mentioned by Rocha and Amador (2018) and Abbad and Legentil (2020), overcoming the challenges linked to home office in the context of a pandemic, includes the adoption of organizational measures to encourage the learning of essential skills for teleworking, as well as the redesign of activities. Aderaldo et al. (2017) and Pérez-Nebra et al. (2020) add that, in addition, contextual variables, such as the space to carry out work or conciliation with domestic and individual activities and the need to take care of (children or the elderly), can affect the level of stress perceived by the individual. Without a doubt, the challenges of adapting to this pandemic were/are great, in all spheres of life.

Like other authors, Sandall and Mourão (2020) emphasize that other determinants related to the characteristics of the worker themselves must be considered, such as: affinity with technology, personality, belief in one's ability to perform tasks and overcome obstacles, preferred rewards, physical health and mental health, among others. Likewise, environmental factors can also act as determinants of performance, for example, having space reserved in your home for teleworking, the organization's PM policies, etc.

Given the home office, pandemic and QWL context, it is possible to observe the importance of the Biopsychosocial Organizational Model (BPSO) worked by Limongi-França (1996, 2006), the approach adopted in this research. According to the author, this model originates from psychosomatic medicine, which proposes an integrated and holistic view of the human being, as opposed to the Cartesian approach, which divides the human being into parts. The dimensions of the biopsychosocial vision are structured into four levels: biological, psychological, social and organizational, which can be better understood in Figure 1.

Figure 1
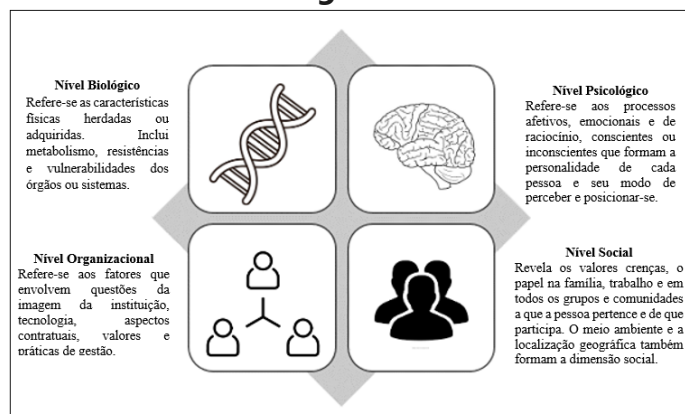
Source: Adapted from Limongi-França (1996, 2006).

In this way, it is possible to understand and evaluate human beings at different levels and consider that all factors in their lives influence their physical and emotional well-being, impacting QWL.

Mental health of home office workers since the advent of Covid-19

Following what Barlach et al. (2008) already emphasized, adapting is not always an easy task, as it requires persistence, skill, patience and resilience to deal with the new in the best way, especially when the new is unexpected. In this understanding, Barlach et al. (2008, p. 105) already mentioned that the "vital attribute of the ontological condition of the human being – adaptation – is the process through which the individual manages his relationships with himself and the environment". Added to this, the home office, for many people, was considered something new, which came in a completely unexpected way. "However, those workers who had not even thought about this possibility in their lives experience a whirlwind of feelings, including anguish and anxiety, in a continuous effort to adapt to the new condition, even if

temporary" (Gondim & Borges, 2020, p 50).

People were forced to meet the needs of work and those close to them, who require more attention, such as children and adolescents who were dismissed from school and the elderly who require more care, almost simultaneously (Aderaldo et al., 2017; Martins et al., 2020). Also according to Kramer and Kramer (2020), and Martins et al. (2020), dealing with the issue "since you are at home" can bring a high emotional cost and be exhausting. In this context, adapting to working from home, replacing the presence of coworkers/sector with family members, adapting to the new work environment, which at the same time is the home space (and distinguishing both), with a new desk, chair, maybe even a new computer, keeping work hours even while being next to the sofa, and being deprived of going out on the street, is not trivial.

Thus, "from conflict to conciliation; From conciliation to coexistence, work and family coexist during quarantine: in daily contact, in the here and now. Today, they not only live together, but compete for the same space at the same time: the house" (Martins et al., 2020, p. 59). In this sense, Rodrigues et al. (2020), Even (2020) and Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés (2020) highlight that this change required the conformation of domestic space as a work space and the limits between working and living time were no longer evident. According to Antunes (2018), since before the pandemic, it was noted that the flexibilization of work was responsible for the illness of professionals, among other reasons, by drastically reducing the boundaries between work and private life. And in this pandemic moment, what is the health of workers like with even greater reductions across borders?

Brooks et al. (2020) and Martins et al. (2020) recall that, in addition to the already known sources of conflict inherent to teleworking, the pandemic context brought some new conditions, such as, for example, the fact that all family members (including children and adolescents) are at home every day and all day long, in addition to the climate of financial and emotional instability and vulnerability that affected a significant portion of workers. Thus, it can be said that mental health has been a very emphasized topic today (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Brooks, et al., 2020; Lopes et al., 2021; Oliveira, Antonelli & Portulhak, 2021). Staying at home, unable to socialize with people or spending too much time with them, being prevented from going to leisure facilities, and even from practicing physical activities, shook people's minds, which, associated with political and economic issues in the country, brought constant concerns to the population (Borges-Andrade & Sampaio, 2020). Thus, Nascimento and Pessoa (2010), Aderaldo, Aderaldo and Lima (2017) and Rodrigues et al. (2020) state that, when work and home overlap and there is no space for leisure, the negative perspectives of flexible work are highlighted. And how can we learn to deal with all of this in a healthy way?

Learning to deal with these conflicts and maintain mental health is certainly not an easy task and, for many, until now, it may not have been possible. As mentioned by Barlach et al. (2008), health is also associated with the presence of hopes, dreams, desires, the absence of which or their impossibility represents a risk to the worker's mental health, such as the triggering of mental illnesses (depression, anxiety, burnout syndrome, panic syndrome). Furthermore, among many researchers, such as Tenório (2021) and Carracedo, Puertas and Marti (2022), they emphasize that the pressure to maintain professional performance at a high level, even in new and, at times, adverse conditions, can generate and worsen these diseases.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is classified as descriptive (Gil, 2010), as it presents the characteristics, opinions and attitudes of workers working from home. Regarding the approach to the problem, it is characterized as qualitative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), as it seeks to better understand the problem in question, carrying out a more detailed analysis of the topic investigated (Yin, 2016).

Regarding research participants, only those who compulsorily started working from home were recruited, due to the covid-19 pandemic. The first research participant was chosen for convenience, with a person who met the established criteria willing to participate in the research. From

that moment on, the snowball technique was used (Handcock & Gile, 2011; Vinuto, 2014), resulting in this first participant nominating another worker who met the established selection criteria, who also nominated another, and so on. Even though there was no intentionality in having only women as research participants, these were the ones recommended, perhaps due to the fact that the first participant was a woman.

Thus, using the saturation criterion (Fontanella, Ricas, & Turato, 2008) we arrive at a number of eight participants, workers from different segments who were working from home. Saturation occurred when the collection of new data did not bring further clarification to the topic under study. In the sixth interview, very different aspects no longer appeared, configuring saturation. However, to confirm saturation, two more interviews were carried out.

All participants are female workers, with a prevalence between 34 and 48 years old, married (5), with children (5) and living with other people in the cities of Passo Fundo and Porto Alegre (RS). Only one of them lives alone. The interviewees hold positions in different areas in the organizations in which they work, two of which have leadership roles.

Data collection took place in June 2021, using an interview with a semi-structured script, prepared based on the categories defined a priori (Figure 2), following the BPSO approach by Limongi-França (1996; 2015).

Figure 2

Analytical categories.

Categories	Definition	References
Personal routines	Tasks/schedules executed in an (un)conscious way, without many fluctuations by the individual, providing better time/ activity management. In this category, aspects related to the interviewees' home space will be presented, covering the number of people residing in the same environment, who these people are (children, teenagers or elderly people), the place intended for work and the need for adaptations, both physical and behavioral (routine) due to covid-19.	Abbad & Legentil (2020); Diniz et al., 2012; Gondim & Borges (2020); Limongi-França, (1996, 2006); Martins et al. (2020); Nunes & Mascarenhas, 2016; Rodrigues et al. (2020); Rossi, Perrewé & Sauter (2005).
Work routines	Sequence of procedures, usual customs and way in which the work is carried out by the worker. In this category, the operationalization of access to documents, co-workers, and demands in relation to the companies they work for will be presented.	Aderaldo *et al.* (2017); Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés (2020); Borges-Andrade & Sampaio (2020); Gondim e Borges (2020); Kramer & Kramer (2020); Pérez-Nebra *et al.* (2020); Sandall & Mourão (2020).
Home office versus QWL versus QOL	*Home office versus* QWL: impacts of home office on the provision of adequate working environment/conditions, aiming at productivity, without significantly exhausting workers. Home office versus QOL: impacts of home office on the individual's perception of their position in life, in the context of their culture and the value system in which they live and in relation to their expectations, standards and concerns.	Aderaldo et al. (2017); Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés (2020); Borges-Andrade & Sampaio (2020); Gondim e Borges (2020); Kramer & Kramer (2020); Pérez-Nebra et al. (2020); Sandall & Mourão (2020).

Source: prepared by the authors (2021).

The interviews were carried out synchronously online, using the Google meet platform, lasting around 30 minutes each. Following this logic, the participants were previously contacted via email or WhatsApp to schedule an interview time. These interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and then transcribed into a Word document and stored in a secure location.

Data analysis was carried out using Bardin's (2006) content analysis technique, as it makes it possible to overcome uncertainties and enrich the "reading" of data, oscillating between the rigor of objectivity and the richness of subjectivity, not of rigidity, as Mozzato and Grzybovski (2011) point out. Thus, the three phases proposed by Bardin (2006) followed: 1) floating reading of the data, at which time the transcribed interviews were read in their entirety, without the initial concern of categorization; 2) according to the analytical categories, the data was compiled and analyzed, as it was possible to explore the material with coding, according to the categories of analysis and identification of the registration units. At this point, the interviews were re-read, identifying the narratives that were related to the analytical categories; 3) based on the theoretical framework set out in items 2, 2.1 and 2.2, theoretical interpretations and inferences were made. Thus, the narratives are worked on in sequence, based on the research categories, with each interviewee being identified as E1, E2... E8, thus guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The results are presented in this section, according to the categories established a priori and following the BPSO QWL approach. In this way, a broad view of the concept of health is adopted combined with people's living conditions, thus covering the biological, psychological and social aspects (Limongi-França, 2015). To this end, it begins with the presentation and analysis of the first category: personal routines.

Personal routines

As expected, the personal routines of all participants are changed by working from home. Of the eight interviewed, the five who have children make it clear that they demand time and attention, which makes the home office routine more complex, as stated by Martins et al. (2020). Only the interviewee who does not have a child (E2) has a specific space for work, with the others adapting places such as the dining table, the desk in her child's room or even the living room or kitchen. Below is a supporting statement:

> In fact, I set up my office in my six-year-old son's room, my apartment has three bedrooms, my sister is sleeping in one of the rooms, where the office would be, but as she came here due to the pandemic to take care of my children, since I have no one to leave them with, she is sleeping there and I adapted my office in my son's room (E4).

In line with such statements, Abbad and Legentil (2020) highlight that, during the Covid-19 period, especially among those who started to carry out remote work systematically for the first time, there were important difficulties related to the absence of furniture and adequate IT equipment. Gondim and Borges (2020) add that many certainly do not have their own space to reserve a place just for work, separating it from all other activities and the general functioning of the home. Still with regard to sharing home and work space, E3 reports that the people who live with her do not respect her work space and demand attention and tasks during her working hours:

> My husband thinks that because I'm at home I'm doing nothing, the children also think that because I'm at home, sometimes I even joke with them that I'm not here, you can't see me, because they don't understand.

The statement is in line with the study by Rodrigues et al. (2020), who state that, among home office workers, there are those whose homes do not accommodate the demands arising from organizations and whose families have demanded more of their time, especially in the case of women and mothers. Both Rodrigues et

al. (2020), as well as Martins et al. (2020) developed their research discussing how routines were changed during the pandemic period. Martins et al. (2020) emphasize that demands overlap or alternate in a different, unprecedented routine, in which work activities and domestic tasks are interspersed, intensifying what was already considered exhausting, compromising QWL (Diniz et al., 2012; Limongi-França, 1996, 2006; Nunes & Mascarenhas, 2016; Rossi, Perrewé & Sauter, 2005).

However, when the interviewees were asked about the technological and physical resources provided by the company, only the company where E2 works did not offer any technological or physical resources to carry out home office work, the other interviewees reported that the companies offered technological resources (computers, cell phones, mouse) and chairs. Furthermore, according to E1 and E6, companies started offering financial assistance for expenses such as electricity and internet.

Work routines

As emphasized by Sandall and Mourão (2020), it can be observed that work routines become very peculiar in this time of social isolation and home office. Pérez-Nebra et al. (2020) refer to those who are carrying out work activities remotely, emphasizing that there are different realities. Finally, it cannot be denied, as stated by Kramer and Kramer (2020), that the current moment leads to many changes in the work context, with those who are having a positive perception regarding the changes resulting from the pandemic with the reduction in exposure to stressors (example: time spent commuting, frequent trips, time control), and those who perceive an intensification of work and overload, which can lead to stress, add the authors cited here, among others. Among those surveyed, such positive and negative perceptions are also observed.

With regard to access to documents, manuals, colleagues, activities, sectors and managers, even while working from home, it appears that all interviewees have it, and such access has improved, as can be seen in E7's statement: "This aspect showed improvements after the start of the pandemic, as some processes were adjusted

and aligned, becoming better when compared to previous periods".

Regarding the existence of difficulties in adapting to working from home, three of the interviewees reported having experienced difficulties at the beginning, mainly related to reconciling the routine of home, children and work, all in the same environment. E3 states that so far she has not been able to adapt and reconcile everything completely: "I had a lot of difficulty at the beginning, it was very complicated, because I have two school-age children, with online classes [..] it is very complicated trying to balance my work with their classes". Three other interviewees say that the greatest difficulty lies in distancing themselves from co-workers and customers, as well as the lack of physical contact with these groups. However, interviewees 2 and 7 describe not having had difficulties adapting to working from home, but rather to the pandemic in general. Below is a supporting report: "I didn't feel any difficulties, I think the biggest difficulty during this period is really due to the situation we are living in, right, fear of contamination, death, but not in relation to working from home" (E7).

In view of the above, Aderaldo et al. (2017), Gondim and Borges (2020) and Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés (2020) state that the home has become, for many workers, the place of work. Certainly, each worker is being affected to different degrees in this regard. Regarding performance at work, most of them report that there was an increase after starting to work from home. They believe that the determining factors for this rise are the lack of need for travel, traffic, face-to-face customers and better organization of routines and schedules:

> I believe that I became more productive, I saw myself as more productive, because then I was able to balance the time we spent walking on the street, traffic, these things and organizing, I learned to plan with the home office, before I wasn't planned like that (E1).

> Wow, I have a lot more time left, the rush between home, company, client is over (E4).

Only E6 had already thought about working from home before the pandemic, so she could be closer to her son, who has a disability, requiring extra care. In this sense, Borges-Andrade and Sampaio (2020) discuss teleworking being positively associated with autonomy and flexibility. This positive aspect leads to greater QOL and QWL (Ferreira, 2007; Lopes et al., 2021).

Home office versus QWL and QOL

As for QWL actions or programs, E1, E5, E6 and E8 report that actions existed even before the pandemic, and that these continued or were adapted for the home office. Some examples of actions cited include encouraging the practice of gymnastics at work, gympass, psychological support, legal help, souvenirs on commemorative dates, among others, which is suggested by Brooks et al. (2020). Such evidence can be observed in the following speech:

> We had gymnastics at work before the home office and today it is still the case, two days a week the person makes the video and sends it and we do gymnastics at work [...] there are also lectures, [...] they send gifts to us at home on commemorative dates, birthday gifts, there's online happy hour (E5).

However, interviewees 3 and 4 report having actions such as coaching and workplace gymnastics before and at the beginning of the home office, but they were not maintained, while E2 states that she had no QWL actions before or after the home office. In turn, E7 states that there was an improvement in QWL actions after the start of working from home:

> It improved a lot [...] it existed but it started and stopped, and there was a lack of engagement [...] and today with the home office there is, there is a QWL program, which organizes lectures with people "at home" or people from outside on different subjects, also a meditation three times a week and another listening circle on Wednesday. So, from my point of view, it has improved a lot.

When asked about seeking resources such as physical activities, therapies or group sessions as a form of assistance at this time, interviewees 1 and 7 report that they sought to practice physical activity or even therapy. The others did not seek resources, however, they recognized that they should have sought it and that it would have been of great help if they had done so. In relation to maintaining well-being, interviewees 1, 2 and 7 state that they managed to maintain well-being without major problems, however, interviewees 4, 5 and 8 were unable to do so, and consider that they had presented a significant loss in well-being. They often felt sad and depressed. In this sense, the following report:

> I didn't look for it, but I think it might be necessary, it would help me a lot, because it was really a very turbulent time, not only due to working from home, but due to the pandemic. What really saved me was my family relationship (E4).

Abbad and Legentil (2020), Carnevalea and Hatak (2020) and Carracedo, Puerta and Marti (2022) discuss the impacts of the pandemic in general, considering that it caused fear, trepidation, feelings of loneliness, uncertainty, anxiety, suffering, losses, grief and additional stress due to the global, national and local health crisis. These affective states that were recurrent in the interviewees add to the challenges of compulsory teleworking, generating learning demands to adequately cope with them, which, according to Barcaui and Limongi-França (2014) and Limongi-França and Stefano (2019), require develop in a harmonious environment, under the condition of becoming an agent of well-being and not a stressor.

As for the advantages brought by working from home, all interviewees expressed the gain and better time management and flexibility, precisely because they do not have to face the rush of everyday life (traffic, getting ready, etc.). Those who have children highlighted the proximity to their children as an advantage: "I think the advantage is being able to be at home, close to the children, working outside we only see them in the morning and at night [...] being close to the children at that time it was the best thing" (E3).

For some interviewees, savings on transportation, food, clothing and appearance are the biggest benefits. In this sense, Tenório (2021)

states that, depending on the company's economic activity, remote work, during the pandemic and after it, has been and will continue to be an enriching experience with many advantages. According to the author, it is possible to see time savings on the home-work-work-home route, as well as flexibility in schedules, the possibility of monitoring and supporting family members.

In turn, faced with the disadvantages, the lack of physical contact, the "eye to eye" mentioned by all the interviewees, was clear. They report missing coffee time at the company, which was a time to pause, exchange ideas and relax. As for their eating routine, half of those interviewed say they have made their diet worse, eating more ready-made, processed and less healthy foods. As for the other half, two report having improved their diet (they used to eat on the street) and two say nothing has changed in that sense.

Furthermore, for four participants, working from home became exhausting over time, due to long periods in front of the computer, the accumulation of work and isolation as a whole. For interviewee 8, what became exhausting and stressful was the pandemic, not working from home. The others do not consider that working from home has become exhausting over time, but they do not deny that there has been an increase in demands from the company, including: an increase in meetings and task control and filling out reports.

Regarding the division between work time and personal life, it became clear that it is not an easy process, in fact, workers often fail to carry out personal tasks and rest due to work, only two of the participants report that they learned as the days go by, hot to make this division. The following are supporting statements: "Being at home I work until 7pm, 8pm, because of being at home I have more time to spend in front of the computer" (E3); "I don't think I've managed to organize myself yet. Reconciling the routine, stopping, having time to eat, ends up getting complicated [...] in my personal life, I lost some things, QOL in fact" (E6).

In this logic, Martins et al. (2020) discuss the conflict between home, work and life, highlighting that new contracts and limits must be established so that this coexistence is as har-

monious as possible and that bonds (family) and results (individual and organizational) are preserved. Furtado (2022) corroborates this by mentioning that it is necessary to look at the worker in an integral way, whether inside or outside their real or digital space of activity, going beyond the "organization" aspects, as working time is also life time.

When asked about social isolation as a whole (friends, work, family) due to the pandemic, participants report that they were impacted and miss having physical relationships with people. However, one of the interviewees highlights the positive side of isolation, as she can see what she did out of necessity and what was out of obligation in her life: "I think it was more of a positive impact, it was good to stop and see what you really want do and what you do out of obligation, in that sense it was positive for me. It's bad not to have freedom, but this stop was good" (E7). As Kramer and Kramer (2020) point out, working life has suffered different impacts, which have consequences.

When asked whether, in the post-pandemic period, they could choose whether to continue working from home or not, five of them would opt for the hybrid model, since the aforementioned regime would provide greater flexibility to their day-to-day work. Furthermore, three of them would continue to work from home, as they adapted to the new format and believe that, without a pandemic, this work regime would be even more attractive. Therefore, as Gondin and Borges (2020) and Rodrigues et al. (2020), it is expected that people's working lives will be rethought, even transforming their meaning and significance.

The Covid-19 pandemic has clearly caused a crisis situation of great magnitude, from the point of view of planetary dissemination, to the number of aspects of human experience, ranging from the microbiological and infectious pole to the domain of economics, politics, management of urban spaces, mental health, and health and illness directly related to work (Ferreira & Falcão, 2020). Still according to Ferreira and Falcão (2020), this set of factors aggravating an existing context of precariousness and new sources of psychosocial risk, brought important impacts

to QWL, as well as a mix of feelings already highlighted by Rossi et al. (2005), Limongi-França and Arellano (2013), Barcaui and Limongi-França (2014) and Ferreira (2017).

CONCLUSIONS

Coming to the end of this research, it is concluded that it was possible to analyze the QWL of workers working from home, understanding the process of adaptation to the new pandemic reality. Firstly, it is observed that the home office had a compulsory adoption, due to the advance of the covid-19 pandemic, and that many workers were not prepared to face this new reality, influencing their personal and professional routine, that is, their QOL and QWL. The home office can be considered an ally for professionals who need more flexible time during their day, as well as constant productivity within their organization. However, when imposed, it can have a negative impact on both QWL (not attending workplace gymnastics, lectures, moments of relaxation, feedback, involvement with colleagues, work overload, work stress) and QOL (difficulty managing time, lack of physical and mental health care, anguish, fear of dying, contracting the virus, losing loved ones).

Since the population researched consists only of women, even though it made it possible to analyze points related to the BPSO approach worked by Limongi-França (1996, 2006), in this more homogeneous group, it cannot be denied that it also constitutes a limitation of this research in reason for the lack of heterogeneity. However, even with this limitation, it is possible to verify that the biggest impact on the lives of the interviewees was not the home office, but rather the pandemic as a whole, which brought a mix of feelings.

Given the impacts on their work routine, it was observed that, in some cases, the process of accessing documents and information was streamlined and, despite facing some difficulties in adapting to the beginning of working from home, they showed greater productivity. However, for other interviewees the greatest difficulties were in reconciling the routine of home, children and work in the same environment. The lack of a comfortable space for work, as well as the lack of understanding on the part of family members about the division and balance between spaces (home versus work), had a negative impact on the QWL of these workers.

Faced with the intersection of home office versus QWL versus QOL, it is observed that some organizations were already adopting actions even before the pandemic and that these continued or were adapted for the home office. However, in others, with the advent of the pandemic, the actions were not maintained and the workers were also unable or did not dedicate themselves to seeking alternatives on their own.

In relation to the advantages brought by the home office to the participants, the most highlighted aspects relate to better time management and flexibility, lack of day-to-day rush to avoid getting into traffic, taking the children to school and getting ready, proximity to children, improvement in eating routine, savings on transportation, food, clothing and appearance, in addition to avoiding strain on relationships between co-workers. As for the disadvantages, long periods in front of the computer, excessive meetings, accumulation of work and isolation as a whole are highlighted. In this way, the mix of feelings involved becomes clear, which are totally related to the conditions/work segments, context, ages and personalities of each interviewee. Therefore, it is evident from the participants' statements that the hybrid work regime can be a good option, due to the flexibility that the model brings to everyday life.

In short, even though a diversity of behaviors is observed when faced with the dilemmas and challenges of working from home, which was already expected due to the differences in context in which each worker lives and works, this study confirms that people are impacted in a different situation, reacting in a very particular way. However, QOL and QWL are fundamental for everyone. Both from a theoretical, practical and social point of view, it is understood that this research brings contributions by working with issues emerging from the pandemic, the home office and QWL, giving rise to greater attention to the well-being of workers, which automatically has repercussions into a healthier and happier society. In fact, this form of work was already underway before the

pandemic and will certainly be part of working life and future debates about work. Finally, it is worth highlighting the importance of addressing such issues from the BPSO perspective of QWL because this approach has as its central concern the human being as a whole, thinking about health as a whole (biological, psychological and social potentials).

To conclude, it is suggested that future research on the topic and, with the approach adopted here, include men in their population, even enabling comparisons with women when working from home. It is also suggested that such research can be carried out in the post-pandemic scenario (in the sense of end), aiming to verify whether people have maintained and adapted to working from home and how their QOL and QWL are.

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