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Calidad de Vida en el Teletrabajo Obligatorio en el Contexto de COVID-19: Percepciones entre Géneros en las Organizaciones Públicas

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: To analyze the levels of Quality of Life in Compulsory Telework during the coronavirus pandemic, of Brazilian public servants from the perceptions between women and men and in segmented profiles: women and men with and without children; women with and without children.

Theoretical framework: Quality of Life in Compulsory Telework, whose theoretical model is composed of five dimensions: Teleworker Activities; Telework Management; Technological Support; Physical Conditions of Work; and Overload resulting from Compulsory Telework.

Methodology: Data were obtained through electronic form with 5,695 servers from nine Brazilian public institutions and analyzed through descriptive and variance analysis.

Results: The results showed satisfactory levels of Quality of Life in Compulsory Telework, with the exception of issues related to work overload. When comparing the perception between the groups, significant differences were identified between women and men with and without children related to the management of telework, more specifically, regarding interruptions and the conflict between work, rest and leisure. The group of women with and without children showed significant differences in terms of telecommuting activities.

Originality: This article presents an innovative perspective, as it reveals, in addition to the different perceptions between genders, results with expressive variances between the same gender and, also, arising from the family configuration, with regard to Quality of Life in Compulsory Telework in organizations public services.

Theoretical and practical contributions: In addition to the gender perspective, the perception of Quality of Life in Compulsory Telework may differ according to the configuration of the family structure, expressed by less satisfactory levels in families with children, which requires managers to propose practices to promote Quality of Life in Telework that reduce or eliminate the sources of perceived discomfort, observing the specificities between genders and within the same gender.

KEYWORDS: Quality of life in telework, Compulsory telework, Gender, Pandemic, Public sector.

RESUMO:

Objetivo da pesquisa: Analisar os níveis de Qualidade de Vida no Teletrabalho (*e*-QVT) compulsório durante a pandemia do coronavírus, de servidores públicos brasileiros a partir das percepções entre mulheres e homens e nos perfis segmentados: mulheres e homens com e sem filhos; mulheres com e sem filhos.

Enquadramento teórico: Qualidade de Vida no Teletrabalho Compulsório, cujo modelo teórico é composto por cinco dimensões: Atividades do Teletrabalhador; Gestão do Teletrabalho; Suporte Tecnológico; Condições Físicas do Trabalho; e Sobrecarga decorrente do Teletrabalho Compulsório.

Metodologia: Os dados foram obtidos por meio de formulário eletrônico com 5.695 servidores de nove instituições públicas brasileiras, sendo analisados por meio de análises descritivas e de variância.

Resultados: Os resultados evidenciaram níveis satisfatórios de *e-QVT*, com exceção das questões referentes à sobrecarga de trabalho. Ao comparar a percepção entre os grupos, foram identificadas diferenças significativas entre mulheres e homens com e sem filhos relacionadas à gestão do teletrabalho, mais especificamente, quanto às interrupções e ao conflito entre trabalho, descanso e lazer. O grupo de mulheres com e sem filhos apresentou diferenças significativas quanto às atividades do teletrabalho.

Originalidade: O presente artigo apresenta perspectiva inovadora, uma vez que revela, além das diferentes percepções entre os gêneros, resultados com variâncias expressivas entre o mesmo gênero e, também, decorrentes da configuração familiar, no que diz respeito à *e-QVT* compulsório em organizações públicas.

Contribuições teóricas e práticas: Além da perspectiva de gênero, a percepção de *e-QVT* compulsório pode diferir conforme a configuração da estrutura familiar, expressa por níveis menos satisfatórios nas famílias com filhos, o que demanda dos gestores a proposição de práticas de promoção de *e-QVT* que diminuam ou eliminem as fontes de mal-estar percebidas, observadas as especificidades entre os gêneros e dentro do mesmo gênero.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Qualidade de vida no teletrabalho, Teletrabalho compulsório, Gênero, Pandemia, Setor público.

RESUMEN:

Objetivo de la investigación: Analizar los niveles de Calidad de Vida en el Teletrabajo - (*e-CVT*) obligatorio durante la pandemia de coronavirus, de los servidores públicos brasileños a partir de las percepciones entre mujeres y hombres y en perfiles segmentados: mujeres y hombres con y sin hijos; mujeres con y sin hijos.

Marco teórico: Calidad de Vida en el Teletrabajo Obligatorio, cuyo modelo teórico se compone de cinco dimensiones: Actividades del Teletrabajador; Gestión de teletrabajo; Soporte Tecnológico; Condiciones físicas de trabajo; y Sobrecarga resultante del Teletrabajo Obligatorio.

Metodología: Los datos se obtuvieron a través de formulario electrónico con 5.695 servidores de nueve instituciones públicas brasileñas y se analizaron mediante análisis descriptivo y de varianza.

Resultados: Los resultados arrojaron niveles satisfactorios de *e-CVT*, a excepción de cuestiones relacionadas con la sobrecarga de trabajo. Al comparar la percepción entre los grupos, se identificaron diferencias significativas entre mujeres y hombres con y sin hijos relacionadas con la gestión del teletrabajo, más específicamente, en cuanto a las interrupciones y el conflicto entre trabajo, descanso y ocio. El grupo de mujeres con y sin hijos mostró diferencias significativas en cuanto a las actividades de teletrabajo.

Originalidad: Este artículo presenta una perspectiva innovadora, ya que revela, además de las distintas percepciones entre géneros, resultados con varianzas expresivas entre un mismo género y, también, derivados de la configuración familiar, en cuanto a la *e-CVT* obligatorio en las organizaciones públicas.

Aportes teóricos y prácticos: Además de la perspectiva de género, la percepción de la *e-CVT* obligatorio puede diferir según la configuración de la estructura familiar, expresada por niveles menos satisfactorios en familias con hijos, lo que obliga a los gestores a proponer prácticas para promover *e-CVT* que reducen o eliminan las fuentes de malestar percibido, observando las especificidades entre géneros y dentro del mismo género.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Calidad de vida en el teletrabajo, Teletrabajo obligatorio, Género, Pandemia, Sector público.

INTRODUCTION

The global pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), decreed by the World Health Organization (WHO), on March 11, 2020 (Contreras, Baykal, & Abid, 2020), intensified unprecedented transformations in the way work is organized for individuals, organizations and governments (Lyttelton, Zang, & Musick, 2020), mainly related to the recommendation of social isolation as a measure to prevent and reduce the spread of coronavirus.

As an alternative to face-to-face work, public and private organizations instituted telework on a compulsory and emergency basis in a short period of time, seeking to meet health requirements and maintain work activities (Nagata et al., 2021; Schmitt, Breuer, & Wulf, 2021).

If, on the one hand, studies prior to the pandemic point out advantages related to teleworking, especially with regard to flexible hours, the absence of commuting to work, the balance between family and

professional life, greater security, flexibility and autonomy, on the other hand, also bring disadvantages such as professional and social isolation, difficulties in career advancement and conflicts between family and work (Andrade, 2020; Filardi, Castro, & Zanini, 2020; Oliveira & Pantoja, 2020; Tremblay, 2002).

Findings from recent research conducted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, pointed out that the individual dimension can influence the perception and outcome of teleworking. In research conducted by Hallman et al. (2021) and Rymaniac, Lis, Davidaviciéné, Pérez-Pérez and Martínez-Sánchez (2021), for example, differences were identified in the perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of teleworking, considering factors related to age, gender, education and experience in teleworking.

In fact, the compulsory and emergency adoption of teleworking as a recommendation by health authorities to face the pandemic, has led organizations, workers and their families having to adapt to a new reality without any kind of prior preparation and social support, unequally affecting different occupational groups. In the wake of these findings, some studies highlight that the advent of COVID-19 caused multifaceted effects on society perceived in different ways regarding social gender equality, family composition with children and professional specificity (Bjursell, Bergmo-Prvulovic, & Hedegaard, 2021; Nguyen & Armoogum, 2021; Núñez-Sánchez, Gómez-Chacón, Jambrino-Maldonado, & García-Fernández, 2021; Schmitt et al., 2021).

More specifically, considering the arguments by Nguyen and Armoogum (2021), that the unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 affected men and women differently, compromising the United Nations' fifth sustainable development goal - gender equality - and the importance of ensuring that telework programs in the post-pandemic context do not accentuate gender inequality, particularly between mothers and fathers, studies aimed at assessing the social impact of COVID-19 from a gender perspective become crucial (Yerkes et al., 2020).

Remote work and hybrid configurations, adopted contingently in the advent of COVID-19, pointed out the need for new profiles of skills and management practices, as well as challenges related to quality of life and well-being in telework were evidenced, as well as the need for innovation in people management policies, with a view to reconciling the achievement of organizational results and the promotion of Quality of Life in Telework (*e*-QLT). In addition, the results of telework adopted in an emergency and compulsory way in the well-being of remote workers has been a source of concern for scholars in the area (Dolce, Vayre, Molino, & Ghislieri, 2020) and little is known about the subject.

Based on the assumption that teleworking will increase when compared to the frequency of teleworkers before the pandemic and, on the emerging question concerning the possibility of greater polarization in professional life along gender lines, as pointed out by Bjursell et al. (2021), the present study aims to analyze the levels of compulsory *e*-QLT carried out during the coronavirus pandemic, of Brazilian civil servants based on perceptions between women and men and on the segmented profiles: a) women and men with children and women and men without children; b) women with children and women without children. It is expected that the results found can contribute to the advancement of literature on the subject, as well as providing evidence capable of supporting the formulation of people management policies, focusing on quality of life and well-being at work, considering the profile, the family context and the needs of teleworkers, and that mitigate the perceived inequalities between genders.

Therefore, the text is structured in five sections in addition to this introduction. In the second section, theoretical approaches on telework, quality of life in telework and perceptions between genders are presented. Next, we describe the methodological procedures used to carry out the research. Subsequently, in the fourth section, we present the results, followed by the discussion of the data. Finally, in the last section we present the limitations of the study, suggested possibilities for future research and the final considerations of the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Telework and Quality of Life in Telework (e-QLT)

According to Contreras et al. (2020), WHO officially announced the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, as a pandemic and suggestions for preventive measures to contain its spread, with teleworking being an important strategy and implemented by organizations and governments around the world (Ahmed, Zviedrite, & Uzicanin, 2018).

Before COVID-19, telecommuting was growing steadily and globally in many industries. The pandemic has accelerated this process and companies must operate with employees having to work in locations other than the traditional workplace through teleworking (Contreras et al., 2020).

Although teleworking has been a modality used in public administration since mid-2005, it has been increasing, at a modest pace in relation to its potential, from 2016, in the judiciary, executive and legislative. Thus, possibly, in the pandemic scenario, many institutions had not yet implemented a formal telework program (Pantoja, Andrade, & Oliveira, 2020).

Pantoja et al. (2020) describe the context of teleworking implementation, instituted immediately and compulsory, without proper planning, definition of goals, analysis of the physical and/or technological structure, the organization of work, nature of the tasks, nor the profile of the servers. In this sense, the authors point out that many public organizations needed to reorganize their work routines, including those that already had telework implemented, to the extent that public servants and managers began, necessarily, to develop their activities from their home environment, regardless of the nature of their activities, their technical skills and their prior wishes.

Pantoja et al. (2020) report the lack of a unified definition of the terms telework and compulsory telework. For the authors, teleworking can be defined as a multidimensional phenomenon with attributes that diversify along the following dimensions: the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the intensity of skills, the intra- and extra-organizational environment and the place where the work is carried out. From this, the authors define compulsory teleworking as a:

Flexible work modality, carried out outside the workplace, using information and communication technologies, immediately and contingently as an alternative to ensure social isolation and productivity, in crisis contexts such as energy crisis, natural disasters, economic recession, public calamity and/or pandemics (Pantoja et al., 2020, p. 83).

In a review of the national literature carried out by Oliveira and Pantoja (2020), the authors identified that one of the most recurrent advantages of teleworking concerns the improvement of quality of life and well-being. When developing an instrument to measure Quality of Life in Telework, Andrade (2020) argues that the concept of e-QLT encompasses several constitutive dimensions, such as the organization of work, carried out remotely, the promotion of personal and professional well-being, the characteristics of the individual, the development of skills and the achievement of life goals, aligned with organizational productivity.

Regarding the benefits of telework, Tremblay (2002) reports that flexible hours and the possibility of avoiding commuting to work have a positive influence on the balance between family and professional life. Other advantages are mentioned by Filardi et al. (2020), they are: reduction in the cost of transport and food, greater security, less exposure to violence and pollution, more privacy, greater interaction with the family and improvement in the levels of quality of life. Also, according to research carried out by Andrade (2020), telework programs contribute to increasing the well-being of workers, mainly for providing flexibility, autonomy, satisfaction, reduction of commuting to work and greater contact with the family environment.

In the context of COVID-19, authors such as Yerkes et al. (2020) point out that many fathers and mothers are experiencing significant changes at work (including where and when they work, the subjective pressure of work), the division of childcare, household chores, and quality of life (amount of leisure time, as well

as the perceived ease or difficulty of combining work and care, and negotiating over these tasks with their partner during lockdown). The aforementioned authors argue that the impact of the first measures of social isolation related to COVID-19 on Dutch mothers and fathers highlights the gender perspective, in which some existing gender inequalities were amplified in this context.

In a research carried out in a Brazilian public institution, during compulsory teleworking, Pantoja et al. (2020) defined a theoretical model of Compulsory e-QLT, composed of five dimensions, whose definitions can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Dimensions of Compulsory eQLT

| Dimension | Mean | S.D. | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------------------|
| Teleworker Activities | 7.92 | 1.98 | 0.94 |
| Telework Management | 7.69 | 1.94 | 0.87 |
| Technological Support | 8.38 | 1.75 | 0.86 |
| Physical Conditions of Work | 7.85 | 2.44 | 0.89 |
| Overload due to Compulsory Telework | 6.47 | 2.03 | 0.70 |

The theoretical model of Quality of Life in Telework (e-QLT) compulsory proposed by Pantoja et al. (2020) was used as the basis for conducting the present study.

Perceptions between genders

The research conducted by Tremblay (2002), in Canadian public and private sector companies, on the advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting, evidenced the existence of significant differences between genders with regard to the type of work, to the hours worked at home and autonomy in the decision about teleworking. However, the aforementioned author argues that both men and women agree that isolation and absence of co-workers are disadvantages, mainly for full-time teleworkers, as well as the flexibility of working hours and the fact that they do not need to spend time on traffic is perceived by both as advantages.

Considering the differences pointed out with regard to female work and the changes that have taken place in the work context of the Brazilian public service, Antloga and Maia (2014) found differences in perception for women in relation to Quality of Work Life (QLT) and its component factors: work organization, working conditions, socio-professional relationships, work-social life link and professional recognition and growth, women perceive the QLT in a more negative way when compared to men. These authors state that women experience work situations differently when compared to men, possibly because of the female social role that attaches to them the responsibility for household chores, caring for children and husband, and work.

The document on the impact of COVID-19 on women, published by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ([UN Women], 2021), addresses that, before the pandemic, women did three times more unpaid domestic care work than men. In the context of the pandemic, the increase in unpaid care work, with children out of school, intensified care needs of sick elderly and family members, and overload of health services, is already deepening the existing inequalities in the division of labor between genders (UN Women, 2021).

In the same vein, in a systematic review of studies on the psychodynamics of female work in the main national and international databases, Antloga, Monteiro, Maia, Porto and Maciel (2020, p. 1) point out that “responsibility for domestic work, as well as for the performance of unpaid activities and the subsistence

of one's own family is predominantly attributed to women". Also in this context, the literature review conducted by Lyttelton et al. (2020) suggests that telecommuting can exacerbate gender inequalities between fathers, increasing mothers' exposure to domestic demands and blurring the boundaries of working life.

When comparing mothers and fathers who work exclusively at the workplace, exclusively at home, and part of the day at home, Lyttelton et al. (2020) described differences in time spent on household chores, child care, and leisure; the nature of time worked at home; and the subjective experiences of teleworking. The authors found suggestive evidence that mothers who work remotely during the COVID-19 crisis are more likely than fathers to report feeling anxious, lonely or depressed. According to Lyttelton et al. (2020), recent research during the pandemic confirms that women's subjective well-being may be more severely affected than men's.

According to Nguyen and Armoogum (2021), both men and women preferred to telework considering the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. However, women were more likely to prefer telework motivated by the possibility of resolving the home and work conflict. In this way, the authors recognize the discrepancy between the activities of men and women who were left with the greatest workload during the isolation scenario. Additionally, the authors point out that middle-aged women have a greater preference for teleworking, which seems to be justified by the fact that they dedicate themselves to the care of the whole family, including their children and elderly parents.

The research presented suggests that compulsory teleworking can accentuate gender inequalities, increasing the exposure of mothers to domestic and childcare demands and blurring the boundaries between the dimensions of personal, professional and leisure life. These questions will be collated based on data collected in different organizational contexts of the public sector, and combining descriptive and inferential approaches, which will be detailed below.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This article presents a descriptive and explanatory study, using a quantitative approach, which was conducted in nine Brazilian public institutions, of the executive, legislative and judicial powers and of the federal and state spheres, in the period between May 12 and June 12, 2020.

Sample

A total of 5,695 Brazilian civil servants voluntarily participated in the research, 49.8% female and 50% male (50%), in addition to 8 respondents who declared being part of another gender. The average age is 40 to 49 years; 58.5% are married; 42% have completed higher education and 40.4% have specialization. The average length of service is 14.1 years (SD = 9.23); 79% hold higher-level positions and 77% of the sample had never worked in telework before the pandemic.

Data collection instrument

Data collection, carried out through an electronic form in Google Forms., had the support of the people management units of the organizations surveyed. We use the Compulsory .-QLT Scale validated by Pantoja et al. (2020), composed of 34 items, divided into the five dimensions of the Compulsory .-QLT, with satisfactory reliability indices. We measured the questions based on an 11-point Likert scale, where 0 = total disagreement and 10 = full agreement. We also raise questions about individual and functional data.

Data Analysis

We analyzed the data through descriptive and variance analysis using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 20. The interpretation of the descriptive analyzes was performed based on the e-QLT classification presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Classification of eQLT Levels

| Mean | Classification |
|---------|---------------------------|
| 0 – 1.9 | Extremely poor evaluation |
| 2 – 3.9 | Poor evaluation |
| 4 – 5.9 | Median evaluation |
| 6 – 7.9 | Good evaluation |
| 8 – 10 | Great evaluation |

Source: Pantoja et al. (2020).

The classification of compulsory e-QLT levels, adopted here, in addition to allowing a better interpretation of the results, helps in the identification of factors that may be influencing negatively, moderately and positively the quality of life in compulsory teleworking, within the scope of the investigated public organizations. Such information can be useful to managers and work teams both in the design and implementation of innovative and sustainable e-QLT policies and programs in the post-pandemic context.

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis of compulsory e-QLT dimensions

Table 3 presents the descriptive results and Cronbach's alpha of the compulsory e-QLT dimensions.

TABLE 3
Descriptive Results of Compulsory eQLT Dimensions

| Dimension | Mean | S.D. | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------------------|
| Teleworker Activities | 7.92 | 1.98 | 0.94 |
| Telework Management | 7.69 | 1.94 | 0.87 |
| Technological Support | 8.38 | 1.75 | 0.86 |
| Physical Conditions of Work | 7.85 | 2.44 | 0.89 |
| Overload due to Compulsory Telework | 6.47 | 2.03 | 0.70 |

In the Teleworker Activities dimension, the general mean denotes a good and homogeneous assessment by the participants in relation to the actions carried out, in view of the achievement of objectives and the cognitive and affective skills necessary to carry out the activities in a compulsory telework regime. Regarding the Management of Telework, this dimension concerns the performance of the management and the other members of the work team with the purpose of promoting the realization of compulsory telework, and the general mean found demonstrates convergence of perceptions among the survey respondents and a good evaluation with regard to the management of work teams in the context of compulsory telework.

Regarding Technological Support, the general mean shows that this dimension was the best evaluated and presented greater homogeneity in the evaluations carried out by the servers participating in the research, which points to a source of well-being in the compulsory telework environment. While in the Physical Work Conditions dimension, the general mean shows a good evaluation by the respondents, greater variability was observed in workers' perceptions in relation to the other factors analyzed.

Regarding the Overload dimension resulting from Compulsory Telework, the score is inverse to the other dimensions of the scale and, thus, the range of perception of lower compulsory .-QLT is found in the highest scores. The general mean deserves attention, which was 6.47 (SD = 2.037), being the most negatively evaluated factor (poor evaluation) and with homogeneity in relation to perceptions about the requirements for carrying out activities resulting from compulsory teleworking, which shows the predominance of sources of discomfort resulting from the items that make up this factor, such as: "In compulsory teleworking, I perceive a greater demand for results" (Mean = 6.71); "I assess that my workload has increased by performing compulsory teleworking" (Mean = 6.38); "Compulsory teleworking requires greater commitment" (Mean = 8.47), "With compulsory teleworking, I need to work harder to be recognized" (Mean = 5.39); and "I need to train myself to develop skills required for teleworking" (Mean = 5.40).

Comparative analyzes of .-QLT dimensions for gender and family structure

After the descriptive analysis, the data were explored using inferential statistics (Pearson correlations and mean comparisons through analysis of variance (oneway), enabling the verification of significant correlations between the dimensions of mandatory .-QLT and demographic data related to gender and family structure. The results of the factors that make up the scale will be presented, which presented significant variance, between women and men and between the segmented profiles: women and men with children and women and men without children; women with children and women without children.

Women and Men

Regarding the different perceptions between women and men, regarding the dimensions of compulsory .-QLT, we found a significant difference with regard to the Telework Management dimension ($F(1) = 19.007$; $p < 0.000$). Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations of the items that showed the most expressive differences related to perceptions between women and men.

TABLE 4
Telework Management Factor Women and Men

| Telework Management | Women | | Men | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. |
| There is quality in communication between team members. | 8.24 | 2.32 | 7.94 | 2.41 |
| Cooperation among colleagues for the execution of activities is effective in compulsory teleworking. | 8.54 | 2.10 | 8.21 | 2.23 |
| I perceive the appreciation of the result of my work. | 7.70 | 2.62 | 7.36 | 2.80 |
| Mean / S.D. Factor Overview | 7.83 | 2.59 | 7.60 | 2.64 |

We observed that all the items that make up the Telework Management dimension were better evaluated by women, among which there are significant differences between the perceptions in the items related to cooperation between colleagues for the execution of activities in compulsory telework, the appreciation of the work result and the quality of communication between team members, we observe based on standard deviations, homogeneity in the evaluations of women and men in relation to these indicators and, in general, good and excellent rates of mandatory .-QLT.

Women and Men with Children and Women and Men without Children

In the comparative analysis between women and men with children and women and men without children, we found significant variations with regard to the Teleworker Activities dimensions ($F(1) = 70.646$; $p < 0.000$); Physical Conditions of Work ($F(1) = 15.009$; $p < 0.000$); and, Overload resulting from Compulsory Telework ($F(1) = 12.750$; $p < 0.000$).

Table 5 specifies the means and standard deviations of the most representative items for each of the dimensions in which significant differences were found between the perceptions of women and men with children and women and men without children.

TABLE 5
Women and Men with Children and Women and Men without Children

| Dimension | Women and Men with children | | Women and Men without children | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. |
| Teleworker Activities | | | | |
| In compulsory teleworking, there are fewer interruptions during the execution of activities. | 6.65 | 3.25 | 7.68 | 2.80 |
| I can reconcile my personal and professional life with compulsory teleworking. | 7.77 | 2.76 | 8.36 | 2.41 |
| I can maintain a balanced routine of work, rest and leisure. | 7.16 | 3.11 | 7.77 | 2.76 |
| Mean / S.D. Factor Overview | 7.74 | 2.70 | 8.18 | 2.44 |
| Physical Conditions of Telework | | | | |
| I carry out my activities in an appropriate physical space. | 7.60 | 2.88 | 7.97 | 2.64 |
| Mean / S.D. Factor Overview | 7.75 | 2.75 | 8.00 | 2.58 |
| Overload due to Compulsory Telework | | | | |
| I assess that my workload has increased by performing compulsory teleworking. | 6.49 | 3.17 | 6.23 | 3.25 |
| With compulsory teleworking, I need to work harder to be recognized. | 5.52 | 3.29 | 5.22 | 3.37 |
| I need to train myself to develop skills required for teleworking. | 5.51 | 3.35 | 5.25 | 3.40 |
| Mean / S.D. Factor Overview | 6.55 | 3.00 | 6.36 | 3.07 |

The means and general standard deviations of the Teleworker Activities dimension show that women and men with children perceive lower levels of compulsory .-QLT in this dimension than women and men without children, ranging from good to great the average rating across these segments. More specifically, women and men with children perceive that they are more interrupted during the execution of their activities; who have greater difficulty in reconciling personal, professional and leisure lives in compulsory telecommuting.

Regarding the Physical Conditions of Telework dimension, the results show that, in general, women and men without children perceive a greater predominance of well-being in compulsory teleworking, when compared to the segment women and men with children. The .-QLT indicator related to the adequacy of physical space for teleworking was perceived less satisfactorily by men and women with children.

In the Overload factor resulting from Compulsory Telework, whose score is inverse to the other factors that make up the compulsory .-QLT scale, the overall results demonstrate a poor evaluation, and that women and men with children perceive lower compulsory .-QLT in this dimension than women and men without children.

The biggest differences observed between the segments surveyed are present in the items “With compulsory telecommuting, I need to work harder to be recognized”; “I assess that my workload has increased by performing compulsory teleworking”; and “I need to train myself to develop skills required for teleworking”. However, it should be noted that the standard deviations found in the items in which there was greater variation indicate less homogeneity in the evaluations of public servants in these indicators.

Women with Children and Women without Children

In the results of the comparative analysis between women with children and women without children, we found a significant difference between the perceptions of these two samples regarding the Teleworker Activities dimension ($F(1) = 51.206; p < 0.000$). Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations of the items with the most significant differences related to the Teleworker Activities factor between women with children and women without children.

Table 6: Teleworker Activities Factor - Women with Children and Women without Children

TABLE 6
Teleworker Activities Factor Women with Children and Women without Children

| Teleworker Activities | Women with children | | Women without children | |
|--|---------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. |
| In compulsory teleworking, there are fewer interruptions during the execution of activities. | 6.48 | 3.37 | 7.72 | 2.88 |
| I manage to reconcile my personal and professional life with compulsory teleworking. | 7.54 | 2.88 | 8.32 | 2.38 |
| I can maintain a balanced routine of work, rest and leisure. | 6.88 | 3.29 | 7.68 | 2.79 |
| Mean / S.D. Factor Overview | 7.64 | 2.76 | 8.17 | 2.41 |

Although the general results show the predominance of perception of representations of well-being associated with the Teleworker Activities dimension, with average variation between good and excellent between the two groups of respondents, we found that, in all items in this dimension, the means were lower

for women with children compared to women without children. We observed significant differences in the items “In compulsory telework, there are fewer interruptions during the execution of activities”; “I can maintain a balanced routine of work, rest and leisure”; and, “I can reconcile my personal and professional life with compulsory teleworking”, and, for the sample of women with children, the dispersion of responses was higher.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The overall results show the predominance of compulsory .-QLT in the following dimensions: Teleworker Activities, Telework Management, Technological Support and Physical Conditions of Telework. For Pimentel and Kurtz (2021) high levels of satisfaction both in face-to-face and telework mode, demonstrate that, even in the period of social isolation imposed by COVID-19, general satisfaction and especially satisfaction with the physical work environment were not harmed. On the other hand, with regard to the Overload factor resulting from Compulsory Telework, the general average found in the poor rating range indicates a possible predominance of malaise experiences in telework.

The results of the specific comparative analyzes showed significant variance between women and men with regard to the Telework Management dimension, women had higher compulsory .-QLT levels compared to men, which demonstrates that there was a greater perception of well-being in telework for females with regard to the planning and monitoring of activities, sufficient and clear feedback and guidance from management.

Telework Management is a factor that is associated with the perception of mandatory .-QLT and, according to Tremblay (2002), the quality of life is an important dimension in the evaluation of teleworking made by women and that they are, in some way, more inclined to see the absence of colleagues as a disadvantage and to find it difficult to self-discipline for work. Indicators related to the presence of colleagues in the virtual environment were perceived as more positive by women than by men, that is, the female gender presented higher levels of mandatory .-QLT with regard to cooperation and quality of communication between team members.

According to Contreras et al. (2020), thriving in remote work environments implies that leaders must adjust the structure of companies, making them less hierarchical and developing new skills to establish a strong and trusted relationship with their employees to stay competitive, while maintaining a genuine concern for the well-being of employees.

For Pimentel and Kurtz (2021), in the gender variable, teleworking in the context of the pandemic presented advantages for the male gender where, despite the high demands, teleworkers have great control capacity, acting actively in the decision-making process and in the use of available resources. According to the authors, lower psychological strains were also observed in the male gender in teleworking than in face-to-face work, resulting in a gender-friendly environment with greater opportunities for learning, professional growth, high productivity and less stress at work.

Xue and McMunn (2021) provided evidence that, on average, women spent much more time doing housework and caring for children than men during social isolation, and women were more likely than men to reduce working hours to adapt working hours due to increased unpaid care time, just as the study suggests that the COVID-19 crisis has not forced gender convergence trends in unpaid work, with the result of the study being consistent with previous research showing continued gender inequality in the divisions of unpaid care work among UK couples before the crisis.

Despite the literature examined, it points to gender inequality with advantages, in general, for the male gender during teleworking in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, for Pantoja, Oliveira, Andrade and Figueira (2021), in relation to the more favorable mean perception of women related to valuing the result of work in a virtual environment, initially, it can be inferred:

That there was/is a greater concern of both managers/supervisors and colleagues of the work team with women, that is, supposedly a greater predisposition to provide managerial and psychological support to the female teleworker. However, it is worth mentioning that research in the areas of social sciences indicates that the female gender tends to have higher averages in indices related to satisfaction, which seems to indicate that women would tend to be more likely to have a positive evaluation within the organizational community's standards of desirability (Pantoja et al., 2021, pp. 9-10).

In the segment women and men with children and women and men without children, significant differences were found in the factors Teleworker Activities, Physical Conditions of Telework and Overload resulting from Compulsory Telework, indicating that, in families with children, workers perceive that there is more interruption during the execution of activities, less ability to concentrate, less balance between work, rest and leisure, physical space less suitable for teleworking and need to work more to be recognized. These results are in line with international academic debates in which several authors emphasize that the pandemic is more than a public health crisis and that social isolation measures have substantial social effects, including a significant impact on the perceptions of fathers and mothers with young children, among others (Bjursell et al., 2021; Nguyen & Armoogum, 2021; Núñez-Sánchez et al., 2021; Schmitt et al., 2021; Yerkes et al., 2020).

When comparing the perceptions of women with and without children, we found lower averages and greater dispersion of responses in the group of women with children and a significant difference in the dimension teleworker activities, mainly with regard to the perception of more interruptions during the execution of activities. According to Yerkes et al. (2020), more mothers than fathers report doing relatively more housework and child care than their partners, both before and during isolation, just as mothers adapt their working hours more than fathers.

Mothers in nonessential occupations adapt their work schedules even further, and are more likely to experience increased work pressure during social isolation than parents (Yerkes et al., 2020). According to a study carried out by Lemos, Barbosa and Monzato (2020), professionals who are mothers want to perform professional and maternal activities, even with work overload, and that the flexibility arrangement and physical proximity to the family that teleworking in quarantine provided was valued by women inserted in more balanced family contexts. According to the authors:

Apparently, for these professionals, the work overload was supported and relativized, in view of the opportunity provided by the home office, to be closer to the family. Possibly used to managing a usual workload, these women valued more the physical proximity to the family that the new routine made possible, than the increase in work resulting from it (Lemos et al., 2020, p. 397).

Lemos et al. (2020) point out that several interviewees who are mothers reported exhaustion and difficulty in working and that this finding raises an alert about the expanded implementation of teleworking in the post-pandemic context, although this model can bring gains, since its homogeneous adoption for the entire workforce, without considering the specificities of the different domestic/family arrangements, it can further stimulate inequalities among workers. For Yerkes et al. (2020), leisure time, an important indicator of quality of life, decreased much more for mothers than for fathers during the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Antloga and Maia (2014), dealing with issues related to women's work implies clarifying the complex engendering that exists in the reality of the female gender, which inserts: working outside, managing requirements of the work context, taking care of the house and/or its management, gestating and caring for children, worrying about aesthetics, romantic relationships, etc. According to the authors, the multiplicity of demands and tasks imposed on women, especially for those who work outside the home, is unquestionable, and even for those who decide to give up having children or being in a marriage, there are still a number of needs to be met and challenges to be overcome, including salary differences, quality of jobs and workspaces, performance requirements and lack of support for female organic specificities such as menstruation, puerperium and menopause.

According to Lyttelton et al. (2020), teleworking increases the time spent for fathers and mothers with child care compared to face-to-face work, and increases even more the time of parents taking care of their children. However, in relation to the worsening gender disparities, Lyttelton et al. (2020) found that teleworking mothers do relatively more housework than telecommuting fathers and are more likely to work with a child present than fathers, which can adversely affect the productivity of mothers.

In summary, the empirical findings presented here suggest that compulsory teleworking may have accentuated domestic and childcare demands, blurring the boundaries between the dimensions of personal, professional and leisure life, which can compromise the quality of life and well-being of women with children in the context of teleworking.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to analyze compulsory .-QLT levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, of civil servants from different Brazilian public institutions, based on perceptions between women and men, with and without children. The overall results showed the predominance of .-QLT in almost all dimensions of compulsory .-QLT. The point of attention is related to the Overload factor resulting from Compulsory Telework, indicating the predominance of malaise experiences that may represent a risk of illness for the workers.

In the comparative analyses, it was possible to verify the existence of significant differences between women and men in the Telework Management dimension, in which women had higher compulsory .-QLT levels compared to men, with greater perception of well-being in telework for females with regard to planning and monitoring activities, feedback, guidance from managers, communication and cooperation among colleagues.

Among women and men with and without children, the results indicate that in families with children, workers perceive that there is more interruption during the execution of activities, less ability to concentrate, less balance between work, rest and leisure, physical space less suitable for teleworking and need to work more to be recognized.

When comparing the perceptions of women with and without children, we found lower means and greater dispersion of responses in the group of women with children and a significant difference in the dimension teleworker activities, mainly with regard to the perception of more interruptions during the execution of activities.

In the literature examined, we identified only one study, by Lemos et al. (2020), carried out between women with children and women without children in the context of teleworking, and it was not possible to identify research that addressed the inequalities between women and men with children and women and men without children, and therefore, the present article presents an innovative perspective, since it reveals, besides the different perceptions between genders, results with significant variances between the same gender and also resulting from family configuration, with regard to mandatory .-QLT in public organizations.

The results demonstrate that, in addition to the gender perspective, the perception of mandatory .-QLT may differ according to the configuration of the family structure, expressed by less satisfactory levels in families with children, which requires managers to propose .-QLT promotion practices that reduce or eliminate the sources of discomfort perceived by fathers and mothers when teleworking, observed the specificities between genders and within the same gender.

The amplitude of the sample used in this study, composed of 5,695 civil servants, working in 9 organizations of the executive, judicial and legislative branches, suggests that the results discussed here can be generalizable and can provide important subsidies for the formulation of guidelines and hybrid programs for quality of life and well-being at work, within the scope of Brazilian public organizations.

We recommend that future studies analyze .-QLT levels in females as: married women with children, married and without children, leadership and women in managerial positions, addressing the invisible capital of motherhood and identifying the importance of support networks in the role of women in public institutions, as well as compare the results found here with those obtained during and after the pandemic in national and international contexts. In addition, research focusing on the moderating effect of organizational and psychosocial support variables across genders, as well as studies with trans women, are promising for the advancement of reflections on teleworking and for the definition of inclusive and diversity-friendly strategies that reconcile high levels of productivity and quality of life and well-being at work. Finally, the issue of leadership deserves to be highlighted and should be studied in more depth, especially its impacts on performance levels and engagement between genders, in the form of teleworking.

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