

TELEWORK IN PANDEMIC TIMES: a critical analysis of the impacts on the mental health of federal civil servants

PÉRICLES NÓBREGA DE OLIVEIRA
IF SERTÃO-PE E NPGA (UFBA)

DIVA ESTER OKAZAKI ROWE
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA BAHIA (UFBA)

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INTRODUCTION

Humanity and, consequently, the organizations have been going through a series of (r)evolutions, as a result of several factors, such as the adaptations in order to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Among them, it is possible to highlight the telework which is being widely adopted by the Brazilian Public Administration (Carvalho et al., 2023).

In the first moment of pandemic, telework was presented in a compulsory way, without the necessary adaptation and training processes for the adoption of telework. Thus, what we see was an attempt to avoid a discontinuity of work, so that this disruptive and necessary practice becomes widely used in various segments (Minbaeva, 2021).

This becomes even more evident in the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IES in Portuguese), so that in March 2020 the face-to-face activities in these organizations are replaced by the online modality, according to the Ministerial Ordinance 343/2020. Telework, thus, becomes a reality, being part of the lives of many workers, even after overcoming the most critical phase of the pandemic (Velasco, Pantoja & Oliveira, 2023).

Its adoption has some reasons, but also have some side-effects. Telework has been used for quite some time, due to its benefits, which are related to the perception of greater autonomy, more engagement and less exposure to risks, greater space-time flexibility and reduced stress, balance between life and work (Saura, Ribeiro-Soriano, & Saldana, 2022).

In turn, it is also necessary to consider the other side, that is, the negative impacts that arise from this option. Therefore, situations such as the feeling of invasion of privacy, especially regarding the work-family intersection (Aguar et al., 2022), loss of bonds and psychological problems (Filardi, Castro & Zanini, 2020) and damages regarding aspects related to the quality of life and health of the worker are verified (Velasco, Pantoja & Oliveira, 2023).

Thus, it is necessary to discuss the health impacts that this scenario of compulsory adoption of telework caused in public servants, especially those who work in education. Considering, above all, that the speed of implementation of this way of working made managers with little or no experience command teams that were in the same situation, which may have caused negative impacts on workers (Carvalho et al., 2023).

Moreover, a paradox may be present, in the accelerated search for a solution to the problem, an increase in the rates of absence from work related to Common Mental Disorders (CMD) has been observed (Brooks et al., 2020). Hence, it is necessary to critically reflect on this context, in order to explain phenomena that are facing incompleteness, i.e., in the deficiency to explain social facts that directly impact on organizational actions, subjects and society (Paes de Paula, 2016).

The very definition of health deserves attention, given the need to overcome the strictly biological concept, understanding that it is an event which, in addition to everything, has strong social elements in its causality (Almeida Filho, 2018). Similarly, considering that it is a process, especially when it comes to mental health, it is important to consider aspects such as subjective well-being, autonomy, sense of self-efficacy, and intellectual and emotional completeness (Mota, Da Silva & Amorim, 2020).

The question is: "were public servers impacted in their health by the compulsory adoption of telework?". Thus, the objective is to analyze the scenarios before and after the adoption of compulsory telework among public servants of Higher Federal Educational

Institutions (IFES, in Portuguese), in view of the absences due to Common Mental Disorders (CMD).

To this end, the next sections are intended to reflect on telework and its adoption in the Public Administration, the health and disease process and elements of critical thinking in Administration, especially with regard to the Cycle of Epistemic Matrices, proposed by Paes de Paula (2016). Subsequently, the scenario of absence for health treatment of civil servants between the years 2012 and 2021 will be presented and discussed, highlighting the organizational impacts and for this category of workers in this context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

About Telework

Telework has been gaining enormous repercussion due to its accelerated implementation and for being one of the strategies to mitigate and combat the proliferation of Covid-19 (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garces, 2020). It should also be noted that prior to the pandemic context, this modality of work was usually related, at its core, to gains in quality of life, mental health, and autonomy at work (Schade et al., 2021).

The concept of telework is not pacific in the literature, so that two approaches are the most prominent. At first it is possible to focus on the displacement of the resolution of the demand, i.e., it leaves the work environment and starts using virtual tools. In turn, because it is a phenomenon under construction, other nomenclatures are attributed, such as the terms "home office" and remote work, which are modalities of telework (Rocha & Amador, 2018).

A widespread concept is that it is a way of performing work outside the physical structure of the organization, using information technology tools on a part-time or full-time basis (Leite, Lemos & Schneider, 2019). Thus, its essence is that it is a modality of work whose fulfillment of the regular day can be performed outside the physical premises of the organization, in partial or full execution, remotely and with the use of technological resources.

In fact, what is sought is the continuity of services provided by the Public Administration, in the search for efficiency and effectiveness of investments and public spending, in addition to giving an answer to society about the developed Public Policies (Filardi, Castro & Zanini, 2020). It is based on the New Public Management (NPM), a movement that emerged before the limitations of the bureaucratic model and that had the prerogative of implementing elements of private organizations in public service (Silva & Santos, 2022).

Telework, due to this reality, becomes part of a scenario that converges to the flexibilization of relations and precariousness of working conditions (Pinheiro & Coelho-Lima, 2022). Thus, teleworkers begin to have diverse experiences, with advantages and disadvantages, which presents itself as an asymmetric relationship, where employers gain more than teleworkers, either with regard to subjective demobilization or even in the suppression of barriers between working time and life time and the duplication and juxtaposition between productive and reproductive work (Antunes, 2020).

About Health and Disease Process

Despite being a widely discussed topic in the most diverse segments, the reflection on the theme of health has not yet found consensus. Almeida Filho (2018) states that the concept of health is a "blind spot", so that the conceptual problem must be understood from several complex heuristic elements, being better investigated within the context in which it is inserted.

Due to the complexity of a definition, this study will adopt the concept of health-disease processes as a social and political demand, reinforcing that it should be understood from historical processes (Almeida Filho, 2018). In turn, when it comes to mental health, the concept should be expanded, considering the subjective well-being, autonomy, sense of self-efficacy, and intellectual and emotional completeness (Mota, Da Silva & Amorim, 2020).

When reflecting on the health and disease process, two perspectives can be used. The first is the epidemiological, whose focus is collectivity (Rouquayrol & Silva, 2018). Thus, from this premise, what is intended is to understand what are the processes of illness in an organization within a context of health emergency. The second perspective, aiming at a better understanding of the health and disease process, overcomes the medication model, as well as the view of normal and pathological (Canguilhem, 2009).

That is, it is important to understand what Canguilhem calls "vital normativity", that is, it is about assuming that the disease is a form of adjustment between the body and the environment in which it is inserted (Safatle, 2011). Thus, the phenomenon investigated here should be understood from the pandemic scenario of Covid-19, which triggered a series of responses in workers, whether physical or mental (van Zoonen et al., 2021).

Specifically, in the public service, this reflection becomes even more necessary, in view of the lack of preparation, due to the speed in which the adoption of telework occurred, besides the unpreparedness of many managers, who had no experience with the use of this form of work (Carvalho et al., 2023). Thus, it is to be expected that an increase in diagnoses of work-related mental illnesses arise, because these arrangements, designs and working conditions act directly on the body and the new forms of work organization, affecting mental functioning (Dourado et al., 2021).

Moreover, despite being an extremely relevant sector in terms of the provision of services to the population, the illness of civil servants, especially regarding mental health issues, still shows little visibility (Martins et al., 2017). Therefore, although scarce, the studies related to this category indicate that there is a high prevalence of absence due to anxiety disorders and depression (Schlindwein & Morais, 2014).

However, a counterpoint must be considered. Due to a greater sense of financial and job security, because of the legal stability of public servants, it is not expected that the rates of this class of workers will be similar to those of workers in the private sector. Furthermore, studies indicate that the higher the level of education, the lower the impact of the pandemic, as a result of the ability to obtain more precise information (Italo & Amazarray, 2022).

Thus, it is necessary that data on sick leave be collected, considering that they may indicate paths to be taken, in order to contribute to the investigation. Accordingly, this reality can be better understood, and may indicate a context that still needs further exploration, either with regard to behavioral aspects, or even with regard to management and collective health (Prodanova & Kocarev, 2021).

About the Cycle of Epistemic Matrices

In the quest to understand the constant changes in organizational and labor relations, it is necessary to think critically about this scenario. Thus, it is necessary to consider that critical thinking consists in confronting social facts with the concepts that are employed for the phenomenon (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1973).

Critical thinking, therefore, proposes to investigate how the interconnections between social phenomena occur, such as telework, labor precariousness, among others, in the face of a direct relationship with the historical facts of the society where the action occurs (Tenório, 2016). Considering that the discursive field of management and labor relations sciences is fragmented and diverse, since its origin, it is necessary to advance knowledge production (Andion, 2023).

Organizations must be understood through social constructions that have their own contradictions, so that research seeks to overcome processes of alienation on the subjects and society (Maranhão & Vilela, 2017). Thus, phenomena such as telework, also involves the investigation of the historical processes involved (Romeu et al., 2021).

To better the organizational phenomenon, some methods are present, precisely to overcome a homogeneous view (Andion, 2023). Thus, the Cycle of Epistemic Matrices contributes by adopting three interests: the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory (Paes de Paula, 2016), as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
Knowledge interests

Type	Characteristic
Technical	It has as its strand the interest in logical practices, having as a component three elements: positive philosophy, formal logic, and technicality (Paes de Paula, 2016)
Practical	It is focused on the interpretation of reality, from hermeneutics, in view of its interaction with society (Habermas, 2009)
Emancipatory	Based on a dialectical logic (Paes de Paula, 2016). It aims to investigate the interconnections of social phenomena, from the relationship with the historical facts where the phenomenon is occurring (Tenório, 2016)

Source: elaborated by the authors

The management processes, increasingly automated and with the recurrent use of technologies, may harm some characteristics of the human being, such as self-development (Honneth, 2009). Habermas (1984) states that instrumental logics and imperatives threaten to "colonize" communicative rationality, so they must be overcome, at the risk of turning people into machines (Tweedie, 2018).

The emancipatory process aims precisely to overcome the difficulties presented (Paes de Paula, 2016). In view of what is presented here, it is about the strategies that workers use to overcome alienating and possibly sickening processes. This reality meets the concept of normativity, which deals with how the body adapts to the new reality, avoiding the harmfulness of the activity (Canguilhem, 2009).

METHOD

In order to achieve the proposed objective in this study, a descriptive study was conducted, so that documents were used regarding quantitative data on the withdrawal of federal civil servants working in education, from the records of the Integrated Subsystem of Health Care for Federal Public Servants (SIASS in Portuguese) located in Pernambuco, Brazil.

Access was made through the Access to Information Law (LAI in Portuguese), and the following data was requested: 1) Cause of the leave; 2) Days of leave; 3) Organization; 4) Year the leave occurred; 5) Job title of the person leaving; 6) All data for the period between 2012 and 2021 (10 years). Furthermore, it was also informed that it would not be necessary to identify the people left. Finally, the data on the number of cases, number of days, and number of servers will be considered as indicators for the analyses of this study.

Given the request, it was informed that item 5 could not be met, since it is confidential information, present exclusively in the medical records of each person served by SIASS and that due to biosecurity protocols, it would not be possible to access the premises to consult this data. All other items requested in February 2022 were answered in March of the same year, respecting the LAI deadlines.

Ethical Aspects

Regarding the ethical aspects of the research, according to Resolution 510/2016, of the Brazilian National Health Council, in its Art. 1, sole paragraph, V, neither registration nor evaluation by the CEP/CONEP system is necessary for research that uses databases, whose information is aggregated and that make individual identification impossible. Thus, reinforcing the position, no process was opened due to the research method employed.

Data Analysis

To perform the data analysis, an initial categorization of the data found was made, so that the classification found in the International Code of Diseases (ICD-11) was adopted, aiming to meet the objectives of this study, three groups were created, in order to contemplate the causes of absence for health treatment: 1) absences described in chapter V - Mental and Behavioral Disorders (F00-F99); 2) absences that do not fit in chapter V; 3) absences with code Z73.0 (burnout), F43.0 (acute stress reaction) and F43.2 (adaptation disorders) that were used to refer to Burnout Syndrome (BS) before the adoption of the QD85 code, according to the procedure adopted by Mota, Da Silva & Amorim (2020).

Data were tabulated in Microsoft Office Excel® program and transposed for quantitative analysis in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences - SPSS program. The statistical analysis used measures for numerical or categorical calculations (Mean, Standard Deviation [SD] and ANOVA) and prevalence ratios (PR). All tests took into consideration a 5% statistical significance level.

RESULTS

The data collected refer to two IFESs located in the state of Pernambuco, which have 2152 employees. In these institutions, between the years 2012 and 2021, 2,494 health leaves were granted to federal public servants of education. Of these leaves, 428 (17.1%) were motivated by common mental disorders, represented in ICD-11 by the F code diseases, while BS corresponds to 2%.

In turn, 2,447 absences occurred, totaling 70647 days; if we think in years, we would have 193 years and six months. And, in a simple average, these two institutions had the equivalent of 19 servers not working, per year, considering all 365 days, due to a health problem.

Table 2.

Averages of days lost by licensees before pandemic and pandemic

	2012 to 2019 (before pandemic)	2020 to 2021 (pandemic)	Variation
ICD "F"	47,7	64,4	35%
Burnout	40,7	50	22,8%
Other ICD	30,14	25,9	-14%
General	33,02	35,02	6%

Note: ICD "F – Common Mental Disorders (CMD)

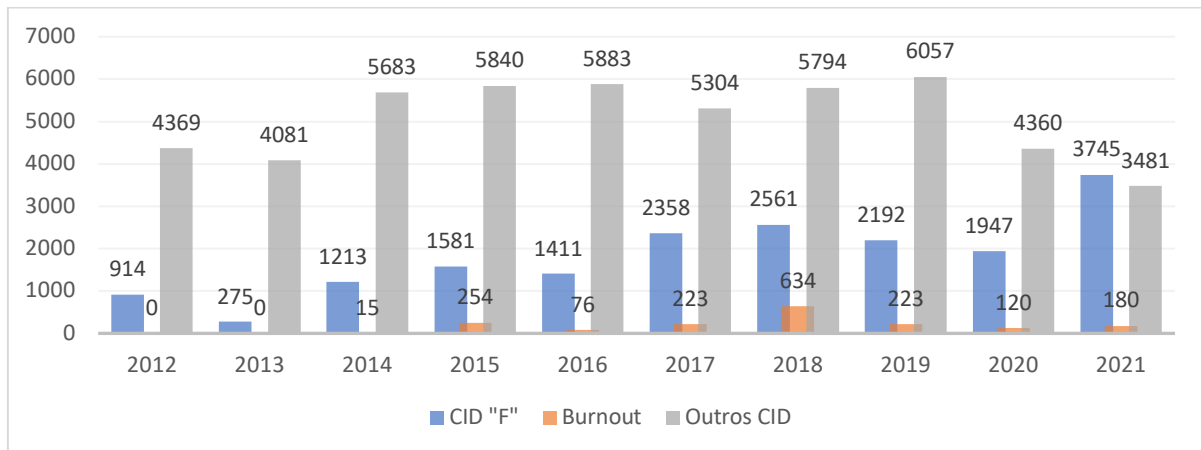
Source: elaborated by the authors

Considering the data presented in Table 2, there is an indication that in the pandemic period, with the compulsory implementation of telecommuting, there was an impact on the mental health of the public investigated. This reality was already expected, due to the fact that the Covid-19 health crisis has a catastrophic potential regarding negative impacts on mental health (Faro et al., 2020).

Therefore, it is important to verify whether, in fact, there was a difference between the pre- and post-pandemic period. For this, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to confirm whether there is a difference between the medians of the number of days of absence in the period before the pandemic (2012 to 2019) and in the most critical periods of the pandemic (2020 and 2021). A statistically significant difference was found in relation to the other ICDs, with a significance of 0.036, while in the other categories the result did not indicate a similar result, with TMC's indicating 0.095 and Burnout with 0.863. All this considering a $p < 0.05$.

A consideration should be made here, given that Although studies among workers who have adopted full-time telecommuting have shown strong emotional distress and negative impact on mental health (Chong et al., 2020), strategies by the workers themselves have been developed, with the aim of preserving a healthier condition. Among these, the search for maintaining part of the face-to-face work structure is shown as an alternative (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

Figure 1. Departure days of servers



Note: ICD "F" - Common Mental Disorders (CMD); numbers - days of absence for each type of disorder.

Source: elaborated by the authors

According to the Pan American Health Organization (2022), common mental disorders, especially depression and anxiety, are responsible for about 25% of the total days of work with absence of workers annually, which corroborates what was found in this study, which found 27.8% of the total. However, when the last year, 2021, is analyzed, the two institutions studied had twice as much as expected: 50.57% of the sick days, only for CMT.

It is necessary to point out that in 2021, even though it was not the main cause of sick leave (23.4% of the total sick leave). It was responsible for the largest number of days (3,745 days of sick leave, whereas other ICDs and BS, together, had 3,661 days, which is less than half of the total days of sick leave).

Table 3.
Amount of leaves between the years 2012 and 2021

Year	ICD "F"	%	Burnout	%	Other ICD	%	Total
2012	18	15,5	0	0	98	84,5	116
2013	10	7,2	0	0	128	92,8	138
2014	32	16,2	1	0,5	164	83,3	197
2015	33	11,7	9	0,3	239	88	281
2016	50	17,7	3	0,1	229	82,2	282
2017	56	19,4	7	0,2	225	80,4	288
2018	62	18,8	20	6	247	75,2	329
2019	64	16,8	7	0,2	309	83	380
2020	38	18,4	3	1,4	165	80,2	206
2021	65	23,4	3	1	209	75,6	277
Total	428		53		2013		2494

Note: ICD "F" - Common Mental Disorders (CMD).

Source: elaborated by the authors

Considering Table 3, it is important to cut out the two years before the pandemic (2018 and 2019), which corresponded to the highest number of leaves of absence, and the two subsequent years (2020 and 2021), which were the most critical years of the pandemic. Thus, between 2019 and 2020, it was found that in all causes of absence there was a decrease in the

amount, with "F" ICD decreasing by 41%, Burnout by 58%, and other ICD decreasing by 47%. Differently, burnout remained stable.

Hence, within the pandemic period and the implementation of telework, the ICDs "F" were those with the highest incidence, with an increase of 71% of cases, against 26% of other ICDs. This scenario corroborates the study by Guiland et al. (2021), which indicates the increase in cases of depression and anxiety among workers in the Covid-19 pandemic.

To better understand the difference in leave, another ANOVA was performed, using the same sampling and time cut-off of the period 2018 and 2019, and 2020 and 2021. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the indicated period in any of the situations, with a significance of 0.516 (CID "F"), 0.577 (Burnout), and 0.740 (Other CID). Thus, it is necessary that this assessment continues to be performed, due to the growth in the number of cases of anxiety and depression (Duan & Zhu, 2020).

Table 4.

Leave before the pandemic and during the pandemic

	2012 to 2019 (before pandemic)	2020 to 2021 (pandemic)	Variation
ICD "F"	16,5%	21,4%	29,7%
Burnout	2%	1,2	-40%
Other ICD	81,5%	77,4%	-5%
% Total	100%	100%	

Note: ICD "F" - Common Mental Disorders (CMD).

Source: elaborated by the authors

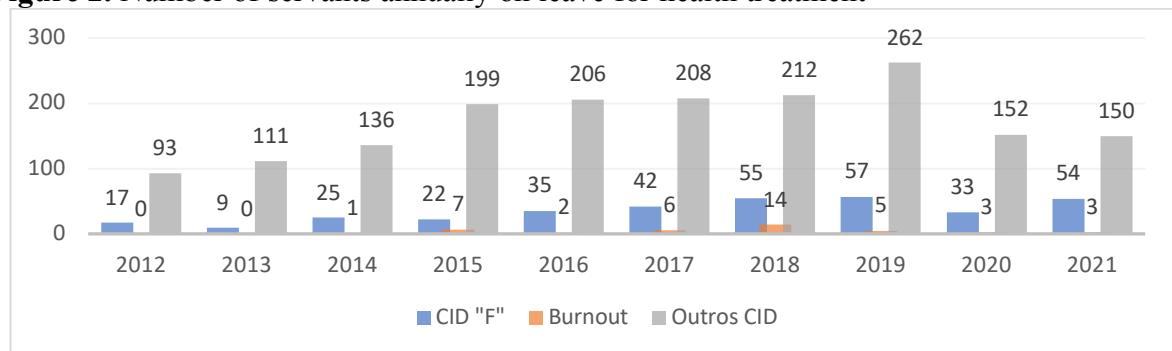
In turn, in the period studied, there was a total of 2,494 licenses, with mental disorders corresponding to 17.1% of this total. Considering the periods before the pandemic (2012 to 2019) and before the pandemic (2020 and 2021), it is possible to see in Table 4 that among the causes of absence, the only one that showed a positive variation were CMD, while burnout and other types of disorders indicated a decrease between the two periods.

Regarding common mental disorders, it is possible to state that both periods are within the expected range for Western industrialized countries, which ranges from 7% to 30% (Zambroni-de-Souza, 2006). However, it is worth noting that even so, the rate found is very high and worrisome.

This percentage increase in CMD notifications between the years 2020 and 2021 corroborates what was verified by Lizana & Vega-Fernandez (2021), who, in a study of teachers, found that the adoption of telecommuting during the pandemic negatively impacted mental health. However, it is necessary to consider that even if a relationship is found between working conditions and the health crisis, it is not possible to identify a causal relationship between both of them.

Regarding the prevalence of CMD's and Burnout syndrome, it was found that the highest number of cases occurs with mood disorders (F30-F39), with an annual average of 26.6 absences (SD=10.58), followed by neurotic disorders related to stress (F40-F48), with an average of 12.6 absences per year (SD=8.84) and then the disorders related to SB, with an average of 5.3 cases (SD=6.01). Observing the total cases of common mental disorders, between the years 2012 and 2021, an average of 42.8 cases of absence each year (SD=19.61) was verified.

Figure 2. Number of servants annually on leave for health treatment



Note: ICD "F" - Common Mental Disorders (CMD).

Source: elaborated by the authors

As for the number of servers on leave, it was found that while other types of leave remained in a kind of plateau, the CMD was the only one that grew in 2021 (54 servers on leave), compared to the previous year, 2020 (33 servers on leave). This indicates that the adoption of telework may have affected the mental health of teleworkers who during the pandemic period, a fact also found in the study developed by Magnavita, Tripepi & Chiorri (2021), who investigated the impact of telework during the Covid-19 pandemic in European workers from various segments.

In turn, it was found that in the institutions studied, mood disorders were the most prevalent, representing 50.8% of the total number of leaves of absence. Comparatively, Mota, Da Silva & Amorim (2020) found 36.36%, while Schlindwein & Morais (2014) verified 48%. Similarly, anxiety disorders (F40-F48), in all three studies, indicated an incidence of 33% among the departures.

Comparing the pre-pandemic (2012 to 2019) and pandemic (2020 and 2021) years among CMDs, anxiety disorders (F40-F48) showed a higher incidence of cases, with a rate of 38.8%, corroborating with the studies of Cheng, Wang & Ebrahimi (2021), who also found an increase in cases of these types of disorders among Chinese workers after the pandemic. Given this, it is necessary to develop exploratory studies in order to understand the reasons for such an event.

DISCUSSION

Given the constant organizational and behavioral changes resulting from the compulsory adoption of telework, it has become necessary to understand the new labor arrangements. Thus, it is important to consider the Cycle of Epistemic Matrices as an analysis model, to better reflect on the scenario presented, with its knowledge interests, namely, the technical, the practical and the emancipatory, as proposed by Paes de Paula (2016).

Regarding the technical interest, this is characterized by bringing a logical approach, facing an empirical-analytical matrix, employing a close relationship with functionalist and interpretivist approaches (Silva & Santos, 2022). Thus, it is possible to highlight the use of epidemiological techniques, whose focus is the health and disease process before a collectivity, using statistical tools (Rouquayrol & Silva, 2018).

Given the results presented, it can be seen that the indicators investigated lead to the conclusion that, in fact, there was a negative impact on the mental health of workers in the pandemic scenario and the compulsory adoption of telework. However, it is important to consider that there may have been a possible underreporting of cases, that is, some people may

have chosen not to notify the agency where they work. This situation is especially common in cases of work-related mental illness (Seligmann-Silva, 2011; Silva & Ramminger, 2014). Therefore, these rates may be higher than those found here.

One particularity should also be considered, as a way to maintain the sanity of the workers, which is the labor bond of public servants. Stability is a factor that can generate satisfaction and can also be a health promoter (Nóbrega & Rowe, 2022). In addition, other strategies have also been used and should be further investigated.

As for the practical interest, it is possible to state that it is linked to a hermeneutic matrix, i.e., to interpret reality, in view of its interaction with society (Habermas, 2009). This indicates that there is a mobilization of cognitive interests, so that workers seek alternatives in order to avoid getting sick, making adaptations from the context in which they are inserted.

The social sphere where this exchange occurs should be understood as a conflicting and asymmetric discursive space (Persson & Moretto Neto, 2018). This elucidates the fact that people experience the situation differently, so that even if workers start to adapt the situations, seeking the preservation of their sanity. This can occur in several ways, such as establishing routines, maintaining interactions with coworkers, even if in a virtual way, among other possibilities.

The collective deliberation also emerges as a technical possibility, so that teleworkers can begin to adopt the argumentative processes among workers, with the exchange of information, resignifying this new reality. Remembering that, even if there is no consensus, it is necessary that this interaction occurs in a way that promotes the participation of all and the isonomy of the participants (Habermas, 2009).

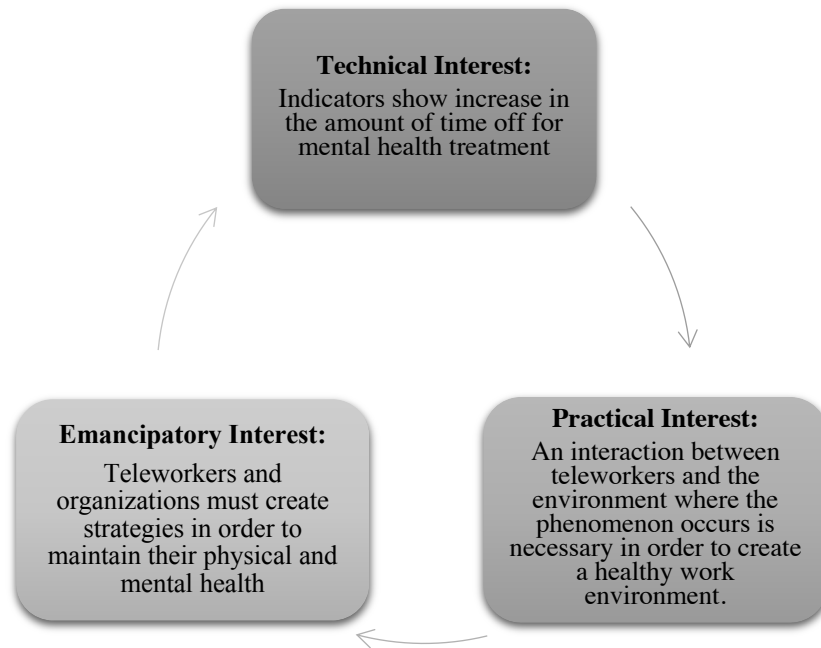
The phenomenon must also be seen from a critical perspective, configuring itself as the emancipatory dimension, which, in a way that teleworkers start to adopt possibilities, aiming to get rid of sickening situations (Paes de Paula, 2016). One of these alternatives is to understand the social reality itself, in such a way that, because they are workers with access to information and a high level of education, they have greater capacity to deal with the situation (Italo & Amazarray, 2022).

Thus, although it was verified that in front of the indicators there was no significant difference between the periods that preceded the phenomenon and the investigated scenario, increasing numbers of diagnoses of CMD's were verified. This says a lot about the discourses and organizational practices, with regard to telework, so that transmitted the idea that we are ourselves' entrepreneurs (Costa, 2007).

The working class must be understood, especially with regard to its heterogeneity. Although civil servants have not shown significant differences between the investigated periods, alarming indexes of CMD's were still verified. This can occur due to the lack of perception of organizational support or the blurring of the fine line that separates work from home (Carvalho et al., 2023; Velasco, Pantoja & Oliveira, 2023).

Moreover, what we see is that there is a need to adapt to these new work arrangements, and organizations must improve strategies to ensure the well-being of teleworkers (Vianna et al., 2023). But this process must be two-way, i.e., workers must also be open to new learning required by this new context. Thus, organizations, especially in the face of their people management policies, must implement actions aimed at providing more effective care for workers, as well as making the environment healthier (Saks, 2022).

Figure 3. Telework in pandemic times, according to the Cycle of Epistemic Matrices



Source: elaborated by the authors

Because it is a cycle, it is necessary to keep in mind that there is not an interest of knowledge more important than the other, so that all have the same ability to explain the phenomenon. Thus, the consequences of the compulsory adoption of telework in the pandemic scenario, it should be better understood from the three interests, with the purpose of reading reality, creating a structure that leads to healthier processes for teleworkers.

CONCLUSION

The objective is to analyze the scenarios before and after the adoption of compulsory telework among public servants of Higher Federal Educational Institutions, in view of the absences due to Common Mental Disorders. The results indicated that there was a difference between the investigated periods, mainly with the observation of the increase in the number of days away from work.

The investigation through the access to official records of leaves of absence, using descriptive statistical methods, from a critical analysis, based on the Cycle of Epistemic Matrices contributed too much. Considering that it made it possible to verify that teleworkers, even in such an adverse situation, were able to find solutions, avoiding greater impacts on mental health, this was less dramatic than expected.

The study contributed to advance the understanding of the impact of the adoption of telework in Public Administration in two dimensions. The first deals with the organizational practical field, showing that even in adverse situations, it is possible that adjustments occur, making teleworkers feel more welcome. One possibility is that macro-managerial structures are created that generate a feeling of organizational support. The second deals with the health and disease process, which must be investigated considering a dialectical process between workers and the organization, based on its various policies, such as people management.

Finally, as this is a descriptive study with a statistical approach, some subjective elements were not achieved, even using a critical analysis of the results. Thus, it is suggested that future studies investigate the phenomenon using other investigative techniques, such as interviews and focus groups, aiming to understand other dimensions of the phenomenon. Likewise, it is important to analyze the ways in which organizations implement this way of working.

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