

**QUALITY OF LIFE: PERSPECTIVES THAT INTERCONNECT EDUCATION,
HEALTH, WORK AND SOCIETY**

QUALIDADE DE VIDA: PERSPECTIVAS QUE INTERLIGAM EDUCAÇÃO, SAÚDE,
TRABALHO E SOCIEDADE

CALIDAD DE VIDA: PERSPECTIVAS QUE INTERCONECTAN EDUCACIÓN, SALUD,
TRABAJO Y SOCIEDAD

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ABSTRACT: Quality of life (QoL) is a construct that challenges science and society due to its complexity and multidimensionality, making it difficult to define a concept that encompasses its broad scope. This study provides a critical analysis of the book "Quality of Life: Education, Health, Work, and Society" through a critical review, given the importance of the book's content for the scientific context. The authors highlight the difficulty of conceptualizing QoL and the contribution of education to its social perception and construction from the perspective of Historical-Dialectical Materialism (HDM). The book also emphasizes the precariousness of work and its negative influences on QoL. Viewed as a historical and dialectical construct, QoL extends beyond the individual to a collective responsibility, as reflected in the creation of public policies. In conclusion, the multidimensionality of QoL increasingly requires the consideration of various factors and indicators that must be socially discussed, through education, in the pursuit of human emancipation.

Keywords: Quality of life; Personal satisfaction; Book review.

RESUMO: Qualidade de vida (QV) é um constructo que desafia a ciência e a sociedade devido à sua complexidade e multidimensionalidade, dificultando a definição de um conceito que abranja seu amplo escopo. Este estudo apresenta uma análise crítica do livro "Qualidade de Vida: Educação, Saúde, Trabalho e Sociedade" por meio de uma resenha crítica, dada a importância do conteúdo do livro para o contexto científico. Os autores destacam a dificuldade de conceituar QV e a contribuição da educação para sua percepção e construção social sob a perspectiva do Materialismo Histórico-Dialético (MHD). O livro também enfatiza a precariedade do trabalho e suas influências negativas na QV. Vista como um constructo histórico e dialético, a QV se estende para além do indivíduo, tornando-se uma responsabilidade coletiva, refletida na criação de políticas públicas. Conclui-se que a multidimensionalidade da QV exige cada vez mais a consideração de diversos fatores e indicadores que devem ser discutidos socialmente, por meio da educação, na busca pela emancipação humana.

Palavras-chave: Qualidade de vida; Satisfação pessoal; Resenhas de livros.

RESUMEN: La calidad de vida (CdV) es un constructo que desafía a la ciencia y a la sociedad debido a su complejidad y multidimensionalidad, lo que dificulta definir un concepto que abarque su amplio alcance. Este estudio ofrece un análisis crítico del libro "Calidad de Vida: Educación, Salud, Trabajo y Sociedad" mediante una revisión crítica, dada la importancia de su contenido para el contexto científico. Los autores destacan la dificultad de conceptualizar la CdV y la contribución de la educación a su percepción y construcción social desde la perspectiva del Materialismo Histórico-Dialéctico (HDM). El libro también enfatiza la precariedad laboral y sus influencias negativas en la CdV. Considerada como un constructo histórico y dialéctico, la CdV trasciende el individuo y se convierte en una responsabilidad colectiva, como se refleja en la creación de políticas públicas. En conclusión, la multidimensionalidad de la CdV requiere cada vez más la consideración de diversos factores e indicadores que deben ser socialmente discutidos, a través de la educación, en la búsqueda de la emancipación humana.

Palabras clave: Calidad de vida; Satisfacción personal; Reseñas de libros.

Introduction

Quality of life (QoL) is a construct that challenges science and society due to its complexity and multidimensionality, which makes it difficult to define a concept that encompasses this scope. The book titled "Quality of life: education, health, work and society," by authors Welton Cardoso Júnior, Berta Leni Costa Cardoso, and Cláudio Pinto Nunes, emerges in 2025 with an approach based on the epistemological foundation of Historical-Dialectical Materialism (HDM) as a method for analyzing QoL. Cardoso, Cardoso Júnior, and Nunes (2025) have extensive experience with the topic of QoL, including published papers, presentations at events, supervised student work, and other published books, two of which have a consolidated academic history in higher education. This background may have contributed to the book's fluid and contextualized writing.

The book is composed of four chapters: 1- "Quality of Life (QoL) and education"; 2 - "Quality of Life (QoL), health and getting ill"; 3 - "Quality of Work Life (QWL)"; and 4 - "Quality of life (QoL) and society," along with a synthesis titled "Human emancipation paths." This production encourages a perception of QoL that goes beyond mere indicators of biological health, considering socioeconomic aspects as preponderant factors in the multidimensionality of this construct. In this sense, this paper seeks to critically analyze the book "Quality of life: education, health, work and Society." To achieve this, a critical review was used, given the importance of the book's content for the scientific context.

Development

A review study showed results indicating considerable heterogeneity in the definition and operationalization of QoL (Costa *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, researchers need to be aware of the specific construct's definition they are using and choose consistent instruments for these pre-established definitions. The difficulty in dealing with such a broad concept became apparent when the authors adopted a specific QoL concept in the second chapter, after the first chapter had highlighted aspects of the multidimensionality and subjectivity of existing concepts. Among the concepts addressed, the WHOQOL is cited as fundamental for understanding and measuring QoL (WHOQOL Group, 1993). This instrument, in conjunction with HDM, can provide a better understanding of QoL in current society. However, it is important to note that while WHOQOL is foundational for some aspects of QoL, it does not encompass its full multidimensionality and multiculturalism. This represents a limitation of this and other QoL assessment instruments.

Still in the initial chapter, the authors present characteristics of HDM, such as historicity, materiality, and dialectics, to analyze QoL as a social phenomenon. They place a central focus on the role of education, especially when considering cultural policies and other factors. Considering that history is driven by concrete conditions of life — including how people produce what they need to survive, rather than by ideas — it raises the question of how to deal with a concept as subjective and comprehensive as QoL. The authors certainly did not intend to exhaust this topic, but it leaves us with a reflection on materialism and class struggle, which is addressed timidly in the text.

Throughout the book, QoL is related to the world of work in various ways, such as Quality of Work Life (QWL), working conditions, and illness resulting from the production system, among others. In the third chapter, the influence of work on QoL is clearly visible. The authors attempt to explain the materiality of QoL through the Human Development Index (HDI), relating the social field to the subjectivity of QoL. However, despite explaining human illness through the means of production and the differences of this index when creating public policies, a contradiction is noted with the multidimensionality expressed in different social, health, and other factors/indicators. In other words, it is utopian to reduce the diverse dimensions of QoL to a single indicator.

Amidst the issues involving QWL, such as the effects of globalization, increased demands and pressures, social exclusion, and others, the authors advocate for a balance between professional and personal life as a way to achieve better levels of QoL. Other factors highlighted

by the authors were wage differences between men and women and the lack of female representation. If mitigated, these factors can contribute positively to a better QoL.

In the final chapter, the book shows that QoL extends beyond the individual to a collective (social) sphere. By addressing QoL from a holistic and collective perspective, topics like environmentalism, sustainability, climate issues, and other matters that connect QoL to well-being—such as leisure, culture, and spirituality—are brought to the forefront. They treat QoL as a topic of global responsibility, representing a great social collective in search of a balance for human development, far from labor precariousness and social injustices.

The conceptual breadth of QoL can be observed in a review study, which cites the importance of improving QoL in uro-andrological patients (Cai; Verze; Bjerklund Johansen, 2021). In these cases, treatment extends beyond laboratory techniques and exams to also consider the patient's perspective and their social relationships, such as with the patient's partner. This entire complexity therefore corroborates the idea of collective responsibility and the need for public

Within the perspective of HDM, the authors provide a synthesis of the book's proposal by presenting the topic "paths for human emancipation." This section highlights the role of education and its importance in the production of scientific knowledge about QoL from a historical perspective, as a result of a dialectical process. This scientific knowledge, therefore, has an emancipatory purpose.

Regarding the references used, it was observed that only four are from the last five years (2021-2025), less than half are articles, and an even smaller number are in English. While the use of older references and a limited number of articles hinders a greater advancement in the discussion of the theme, a positive point is the authors' concern to include important and diverse citations throughout the book for the discussion on QoL. These include citations from the UN, WHO, Selye, Marx, Foucault, Nahas, Demo, Jean Piaget, Vygotsky, Bauman, Freud, among others. This approach was sufficient for the authors' proposal, thus disagreeing with another review published about the Portuguese version of the same book (Amaral, 2025), which pointed to the lack of a specific reference as a gap in this work.

Conclusion

The book presented some gaps. One concern is the use of references, which could have been more current and prioritized scientific articles to increase the level of evidence. Another gap is the argumentation on the materiality of the QoL concept within the educational context,

which could have included more information about class struggles. Nevertheless, the book's uniqueness lies in its dissemination with scientific rigor, driven by the educational process toward human emancipation.

By highlighting the existence of diverse multidimensional and multicultural factors that constitute QoL, with education as a central part of this process, discussing sustainability means thinking about this construct collectively and sharing the responsibility. Therefore, the book "Quality of life: education, health, work, and Society" is suggested as an important reference in this field. The work shows that quality of life is a fundamental right that must be protected and promoted through public policies and identifies education as a fundamental possibility in this process.

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